Conversion K

Fol. 1.

¶A breefe Treatise exhorting sinners to repentance, commonly called, The conuersion of a sinner.

¶The Argument.

Sinners are commonlye conuerted to God through feare and dread. VVho if they reade and well weigh holy vvrit, vvould tremble and quake, considering the iminent perils vvherin they dvvell, and vvould diuert from their vvycked vvayes, to the path of perfection, therby the better to ryd them selues from the gnawing grypes of a gyltie conscience, and dreadful tormentes due vnto sinne, vvhich otherwise God threatneth vpon them.

The first Chapter.

VVE reade in the diuine Scriptures, that God, before he defaced and vtterly rased the citie of Hierusalem by Nabuchodonozor king of Babylon, sayde to

Iere.32. to the Prophet Ieremie in this wise: Take a booke not written in before, and write therein that whiche I haue sayde vnto thée, agaynst Juda, and against Israel, from the first day I began to talke with thée, euen vntill this present day, and publishe it in the presence of al the people, thereby to proue, whether this Nation vnderstanding the manyfolde miseries I minde to bring vpō thē, wil reuolt frō their iniquities, that in so doing I may haue compassion vpon them, pardon their offences, and cease to exercise the whippe of my wrath which I haue already prepared. The Scripture addeth further, that Baruch Scribe to this Prophet, pronouncing that whiche he had written, in the open audience & assembly of the people and Princes, such horrour and feare fel amongst them, that as men amazed, ech behelde others, considering the heapes of woes and wretchednes whiche then was vttered before them.

This is the way (gentle Reader) that god then practised, and hath done many

times

times since, to daunt mens hartes, and violently to wrest them from their wickednesse, as the most effectuall and forcible meanes that may be founde to that purpose. For suche and so great are the things whiche the Scriptures and our fayth dayly telleth vs in the fauour of vertue, and hatred of vice, that if men would reade them attentiuely, and ponder them aduisedly, there is no doubt but their hartes would relent, and their flesshe tremble thereat, considering the dreadfull daungers wherin they dwell. Wherefore the chiefest thing that the Prophet desired aboue all others for the redresse of this vncurable maladie, was this, when we sayd: I woulde God this senseless generation whiche are vtterly deuoyde of counsel, did knowe and throughly foresee what wil happen vpon them, which if they did (as in duty they are bound to do) they coulde not possibly proceede or cõtinue lõger in their so crooked course of life. But they are al sonke in the vile sinke of sensuall delightes: some hunte Deut. 32.

after honours, some for high promotions and dignities, others beating their braynes day and night howe to cloth curiously their carraine corps, and to accomplish their carnal concupiscence: haue no time, eyes, nor harte, to loke to their owne estate, and with the eyes of their minde to meditate vpon these things, whereof the Prophet speaketh very properly, saying: Behold, Ephraim is like vnto a Doue deceiued, that hath no harte. For the wicked haue harte, wit, and will ynough, to loue, to couet, and to count againe and againe vpon the pelfe of this worlde, but they haue neither witte nor wyll once to thinke vpon the glory of the worlde to come, whiche is so infinite and so inestimable, that if the least part therof be exactly tried & examined in the minde, it would suffice to euacuate the filthy smoke which hath shut vp the eyes of their vnderstãding, and to make them to acknowledge & confesse their owne errour. For this cause therfore beeing moued principally, haue thought it very

Osea. 7.

ry requiſite to ſet down certayne perſwaſions tending to this purpoſe, to the viewe of all that liſte to reade or write them. Following herein the example of the Prophet Jeremie, to ſhewe not onely the greeuous calamities that God hath prepared for the vniuſt, but alſo the perfect bliſſe that he hath prouided for his ſeruants the godly, that the euill diſpoſed returning frō their wicked race, may be receiued into the fauour and mercy of God, releaſed of their treſpaſſes, and deliuered from all thoſe puniſhmentes whiche God manaseth vppon them in holy Scriptures.

¶The Argument.

A Chriſtian ought to conſider his profeſsion, that he is ſubiect to death, and muſt render a ſtraight accompt in the other life of al his doings here. Vvhere he ſhall diſcerne ſenſibly the cryes and greefes intollerable, wherwith death and ſinne rewardeth the vngodly, both here, and in the world to come, there neither

the beauty and fine feture of the body, neither the flattery of falſe fortune, nor yet the pompe of ſtately dignitie, ſhall ought preuayle to withſtande the wrath of the iuſt ludge agaynſt the vvretched ſinner.

The.ij. Chapter.

TAking my firſt entry in that which is moſt obiected to our ſences: Remember that thou art a Chriſtian, and a man. Concerning thou art a man, hold it for a ground infallible, that thou ſhalt dye, after which death, becauſe thou arte a Chriſtian, be ſure thou ſhalt geue vp a reckoning of thy life forpaſſed. Of this, the fayth whiche we profeſſe will not permit vs to doubt: that other, dayly experience doth confirme aſſuredly, ſo that none can ſhunne or eſcape the one nor the other. We he Pope, Prince, or Emperour, there ſhall come a time wherein eyther he ſhall ſee bright day continually, or vgly night inceſſantly. That time ſhal come without al doubt, yet thou knoweſt not when, whether

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it will be to day or to morow. In what time thou nowe readeſt this writing, whole and ſounde in all thy ſences and members, meaſuring the dayes of thy life according to thy buſineſſe, and delightes, ſhalt ſée thy ſelfe in a bedd with a candle in thy hande, attending the dint of death, and ſentence pronounced againſt humaine kinde, whiche by no maner ſuite may be releaſed. There ſhal be preſented vnto thée the depriuation of all earthly delightes, the inſupportable payne and paſſion of death, the ende and laſte pagent of thy life, the horrour of thy graue, the curſed condition of thy body, allotted to be deuoured of wormes. But the wretched eſtate of the ſoule will be muche more grieuous vnto thée, whiche beeing yet in the body, knoweth not after an houre or two where his habitation ſhall be aſſigned.

Then in a moment thou ſhalt ſée thy ſelfe ſet before the tribunall ſeate of God almightie, blaming and accuſing vnto him thine owne naughtie life.

There thou ſhalt clearely diſcerne the foule enormious crimes whereof thou art guylty, and ſhal curſe ten thouſand times, the day in whiche thou diddeſt tranſgreſſe the commaundementes of God, and the delight which ſtirred thée therunto. Then ſhalt thou merueyle at thy ſelf, how for ſo brickle pleaſures (as are thoſe which thou imbraſedſt) diddeſt hazarde thy ſelfe to indure perpetuall tormentes, wherof thou nowe beginneſt to haue a taſt and ſmack, for that the ioyes béeing now quite vaniſhed away, & the dome due vnto them approching neare, that ſlender ſubſtaunce which was in them loſing his eſſence and being, ſéemeth that it was nothing at all: But the remorſe and ſting wherewith they preſently prick and preſſe thy conſcience, appeareth to be of ineſtimable force and efficacie.

Perceyuing therefore, how for ſuch tranſitorie trifles thou art at poynt to be bereaued of ſo incomparable felicitie, béeing abaſhed thereat, conſideréſt thine owne diſtreſſe, for that thou hauing

uing runne out thy race, there reſteth no longer continuance of life, nor leyſure of repentance, neyther thy worldly frændes, neither the Idols to whom thou haſt auowed the whole trauayle and terme of thy life, can aſſiſt or ſuccour thée at all, yea thoſe things which earſt thou louedſt moſt tenderly, will be hære vnto thée the cauſe of greateſt græfe. Tel me, I pray thée, when thou ſhalt ſée thy ſelfe plunged in this perpleritie, whyther wilte thou turne? what wilt thou do? to whom wilt thou crye? To go backe it is impoſſible, to go forwarde intollerable, to remayne as thou art thou mayeſt not, what then wilt thou do? Then ſayth God by the mouth of the Prophet, the Sun ſhal not be ſéene of the vngodly in the midday, and I will bring darknes vpon them in the bright day, and I will conuert their pleaſaunt ſportes to bytter playntes: their dancing and daliying, to dolour and deadly dread. Oh what wordes be theſe, The Sunne ſhal go downe in the midday, becauſe Ezech. 32.

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the huge heape of ſinne then ouerwhelming the wicked, whiche ſéeing by the iuſte iudgement of God the courſe of their life and time of repentance to be abridged, many of them are ſo appaled with feare, that they fal to flat diſpayre of the mildeneſſe and mercy of God, And abyding yet in the middeſt of the day, for ſo muche as is remaynent of their mortal life, which is the very time to merite or not to merit, it ſéemeth vnto them that they haue no longer reſpect to dw good or euyll, but are vtterly excluded of both: verily the paſſion of feare is of great force and vehemencie, whiche maketh thinges that be farre from vs ſéeme to be preſent, and of a trifle rayſeth a tragedie. If the conſideration of this, cauſeth them ſometime to quake a little, what then ſhall the feare of their vndoubted and iuſt ieopardie cauſe them to dw? They béeing yet in this life, beginne to ſuffer ſenſibly the gréefe and reproche of the Reprobate, and in one very momẽt are both quicke and dead. For bewayling the preſent

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pleaſures which they muſt forſake, beginne to feele the future miſerie which ſo muche they feare. They holde them moſte happie which tary heere behinde, whereby they are prouoked to enuie, which greatly augmenteth their greefe. To thoſe the Sunne goeth downe at none dayes, for ſo muche as which way ſoeuer they caſte their eyes, they ſee them ſelues debarred on euery ſide from acceſſe to heauen, and that no beame or ſparke of comfort appeareth vnto them: for if they regarde the bountie of God, they ſee howe ſore they haue offended him: if they beholde his iuſtice, they ſee him in a maner rigorouſly to ruſhe vpon them, for that hitherto the time and tide hath bene at their becke, but nowe Gods turne is at hande: If they looke backe to their life forepaſſed, they ſee what accuſations groweth ther of: If to the time preſent, they ſee themſelues to pecke ouer the pearch by peece meale: If they looke forwarde a little further, they beholde the Iudge attending for their accomptes. Alas what

shall the seely wretches doo, beeing atteynted with so many trespasses, and affrited with suche furious feares at once. For this cause the Prophet said, that the bright day shal be turned into darknesse, thereby to geue vs notice, that those things whereof the wicked are wont to take their greatest consolation, shoulde then be vnto them the cheefest cause of their discomfort. It is a good thing, I graunt, for a man to see his sonnes, his freendes, his house, his worldly works, and all that he loueth besides: but then this chearefull light shal be altogether conuerted to profound darknes, for that al these things shal heape more heauinesse, and shall become most bitter persecuters of their affectioned louers. For as by nature and cõmon custome we take no small delight in the present possessiõ of those thinges which we loue and like well: So likewise, the losse thereof bringeth excessiue greefe. Therefore let the sweete children depart out of their fathers sight when he lyeth at poynt of

death,

death, and let the mother alſo abſent her ſelfe, that ſhe may not geue and receyue by her preſence ſo many ſharpe aſſaultes of ſorowe. And his departure béeing into ſo far countreys, his iourney through ſo ſtrange and vnknowen wayes, the pinching ſmart which he abydeth, will not permit him to haue confidence in any thing, neyther will graunt him to take his leaue of hys freendes. If thou ſtandeſt nowe vpon the ſame termes I ſpake of, thou ſhalt wel perceiue I haue not ſwarued from the truth: but if thou be not yet come to this gulfe, beléeue them that haue made their paſſage before thée, as Eccleſiaſtes ſaith, They which paſſe ouer the Seas do tell ſtrange perils: if ſuch thinges do occurre ordinarily before the departure, what ſhal happen after? If the eue and vigil be ſo dreadful, how ſhal the feaſt it ſelfe be, and day of ſaluation? Tell me, I pray thée, what wilt thou thinke, when thou béeing depriued of this light and life, alone, poore and naked, without any other

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cõpanion than thine owne giltie con-
science, shalte make thy appearaunce
before the supernall seate of the righ-
teous Iudge, where a rigorous and se-
uere reckning shall be exacted of thee.
There shal be no talk of hanging, head-
ding, or depriuing of this mortall life,
but only of the death and life eternal. If
in the recordes of this rufull reckoning
thou be deeply charged with arrerages,
debtes, and trespasses, what yrkesome
agonies shall thy pore harte then in-
dure? Howe muche shalt thou be con-
founded? How sore shalt thou repent
thee to haue done amisse? Howe distres-
sed of comfort and counsel shalt thou be?
The greefe of the Princes of Iuda was
exceeding great, when they beheelde the
pearsing sworde and souldiers of Se-
sack king of Egypte, to be dispearsed
through the streetes of Hierusalem,
when by their present plague and pu-
nishment, they recognized and confessed
their former defectes. But what is all
this, beeing compared to the confusi-
on and woe whiche there shall wrap

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the wicked on euery side: what shall they do? whither shall they flee: who shal be their shielde and defence: For there weeping and wringing of hands do not moue cõpassion: there detesting of former follies is not accompted of: there no petition, no promise will be accepted: There no truce dayes or time of repentance can be graunted, for that hauing finished the last pageant of the play, they can not enter the stage agayne to play their part afreshe: there neither eloquence, nor worldly wealth, nor fauour, may purchase pardon, for that Salomon sayth, In the dayes of tribulation ryches shall be of no force, and shall be despised vtterlye, onely Iustice and equitie shall defende thee from death. But who can describe or paynt in his colours the seueritie of his iudgement. Prou. 11. Ezech. 17.

This exhortation then beeing so good and so fruitfull, I beseeche thee deare brother, sucke out the sappe and sweete thereof for thy commoditie, scanning and considering attentiuely this wher-

vpon

vpon thou muſt truſt and depende, as the thing which concerneth thy perpetuall wealth or woe, and though herein are many things well worthy to be noted, yet aboue all others, let theſe thræe things neuer be forgotten. Then firſt, what græuous payne thou muſte then ſuffer, for hauing purchaſed by thy deſert Gods indignation. The ſeconde, how feruently thou wilt wiſhe that thou haddeſt framed thy life according to his holy will and pleaſure. The thirde, that loke what penaunce thou wouldeſt then be glad to performe, if it might be graunted thæ: nowe through mature deliberation to aſſay and labour to liue in ſuch ſort as then thou wilt wiſhe to haue liued.

The Argument.

At the day of Iudgement a Chriſtian muſt be accomptable perticulerly of ech little thought and fact committed in this life: vvhere the ſinner beeing conuicted by the iuſt ſentence of God, shal be detruded to perpetual paynes, gaſtly shri-

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kes, and to the profounde darknesse of thinfernal prison: and there beeing scorched with the glowing coles which be neuer extincted, through wrath and fury, shal curse both God and himselfe, and calling eftsones to minde al the good and euil which he hath omitted and committed, augmenteth therby his owne annoy. He therfore that will not obiect himselfe to so many miseries, must cal him selfe to repentaunce in time.

The. iij. Chapter.

After death, foloweth the particuler and special iudgement of euery man, and after that the generall and vniuersall iudgement of al men, wherein shall be fulfilled the saying of the Apostle, We must al of force shewe our selues before the iudgement seate of God, that euery one may geue an accompt of the good & euill he hath done in this body. Many matters are to be considered in this iudgement, but one of the chiefest, is, to marke of what things we must geue a recko-

2. Cor. 5.

reckoning. I wil searche Hierusalem diligently (sayth God) with a candle in my hande. Suche is the phrase of the Scripture, whereby we ought to be admonished how narowly we shal be then sifted and searched, in the very least things that may be. For there shal not be one fond cogitation, nor one minute of an houre mispente, but it shall be skored vp in this reckoning. Who is not abashed and appalled at these wordes of our Sauiour, saying, Verely I saye vnto you, that at the time of this audite, men shal be accountable of euery vole worde which they speake vnadvisedly. Then if of these wôrdes which hurt or hinder no man, a reckning shal be required, what shal be required, I pray you, of dishonest and vnseemely speaches, of filthy imaginations, of handes bathed and imbrued with blod, of wanton lokes and vncontinent eyes? In fine, of the whole life imployed and consumed in lewdenes and trecherie? If this be true, as it is moste true, what can be inferred or gaynesayed,

why

why this iudgement shoulde not be so rigorous as it is knowen to be in dede: Howe full of ignominie shall he be, who in the open face of suche a reuerent Senate, is prested and burthened with eche dayne worde that hath passed him from the tyme of his nativitie: Who wyl not wonder at suche a straunge demaunde neuer harde of before: and who durst to adnouche it, vnlesse it had bene the wordes of Gods owne mouth: What king hath euer exacted an accompt of any his subiectes to the value of a pinne: O howe excellent is the Christian religion, howe pure is the sinceritie whiche by it we are taught, and with howe great care doth it demaunde the same puritie agayne, and how sharply doth it punishe our defects herein. Further, how passing great shalbe the shame and reproch of the reprobate, when al the mischefes which hitherto they haue closly couered in the corners of their house, and al the brutishe behauiour of their youth, with all the secrete lores and festred

carbuncles of their conscience, shal be published in the theater and open veiwe of al the world. And further, who standeth vpon suche sure grounde, that hearing this, his colour doth not begin to chaunge copy. Some rather then they wil disclose the secretes of their hart to one man, in a place sequestred from all accesse, beeing ouercome with shame, in eschewing therof, haue bidden the brunt of many huge perils: Howe shal they then be confounded when their moste couert giftes and treasons shal be reuealed in the presence of God and hys Angels, before so many millions of men and women, as haue bene from the beginning, are nowe, and shal be hereafter. This confusion shalbe so great, that as the Prophet sayth, they shal cry vnto
Math. 25. the hilles, saying, O ye hilles fal vpon vs, and close vs in your caues, that we may not shewe our selues with such exceeding shame. But wo worth ye wretches, your hope is frustrate, ye toyle agaynst the tide, weighing the force of that sentence definitiue, Go ye caytiues into

into everlasting fire, long since prepared for Satan and his adherents. What shal that cursed generation imagine then will become of themselues hearing this? for if, as Job sayth, we can scarse abyde to heare his mildest wordes, who can abide those thundring threats of his omnipotencie? These wordes shal be so sharpe and so pearsing, that at the very instant the earth shal open it selfe wide and large, and into the bottome and bowels therof shal be whirled topsie turnie, al those, who, as the same Job sayth, here haue had their paradise and pleasures, in sundry sortes of Musike and harmony, trifling out their time and yeres in al kinde of mirth and iolitie. This fal and cracke of the earth S. Iohn describeth in his Apocalips in this maner, I saw an Angel discending from heauen with great power, and with suche brightnes, that al the earth was lightned therewith, and he cried aloude, saying, The great citie of Babylon is fallen downe, and is made the habitation of deuils, and the cage of al

Job. 4.

Job. 2.

filthy and abhominable fowles. And further he sayd: I sawe another mightie Angell lifting vp on high a great stone, much like to a mylstone, and dyd cast it into the sea, saying, With such a violence shal the great Babilon be throwen into the bottomlesse pit, and shal neuer recouer his estate againe. In this sort shal the vngodly fal into the blacke and gastly prison ful of confusion and
Esai. 66. vtter desolation. But what toyng can expresse the innumerable and sundry sortes of torments, in that place addressed for the wicked? There their bodies shal be broyled with furious flames cõtinually: there their soules shalbe consumed with the worme of conscience, whiche wil neuer cease his grieuous gnawing: There shal be that incessant howling and gnashing of teeth, whereof the Scriptures treateth in so many places: There these vnhappie wretches surseysed with cruel dispayre and rage, shall ware wood against God and them selues, in suche dispiteous wyse, that they shall deuoure their

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owne flesh, and in a franticke mood rent it with their nayles, crashing their teeth together, and spilling their Intrayles with sorowe and sighing, blasphemming and denying cõtinually their creator that hath adiudged them to such sharpe punishmentes: There euery of them shal crie out vpon his cursed condition and vnfortunate byrth, eftsones repeating those pityful bewaylinges, and woful wordes of pacient Job, but with a mynde and intent farre contrarie to his. These bee the wordes. Lost be the day wherein I was borne, and the night in whiche it was sayde, A man is come into the worlde: let that day be turned into darknesse: let it not be reckoned of God, nor beautified with light: let it be ouerwhelmed with darknesse and shadowe of death: let it be full fraught with obscuritie and byternesse: let that night be ouercast with a black cloude: let not that day be numbred among dayes and monthes of the yere. Why dyd not death receiue me so sone as I was issued out of my mothers Job.3.

womb? why was I not caried from the place of my byrthe straighte to my graue? why was I lulled in my mothers lap? or why did she giue me suck? This shal be their melody, their mydnight mattens, their morning and euening prayer. O filthy tongues, whiche bable of nothing els but brawling and blasphemie. O wretched eares, which heare no other things but woful mourning. O vnhappy eyes, whose obiect is miserie vpon miserie. O wretched bodies, who haue for your harbour a fyrie fornace. In what case shal they then be who heere earst wallowed in wealth and wantonnesse? O what fleeting delight hath wrought continual greefe? O what woful habitations are addressed for you? Nowe gone is al your gallant glee and iolitie, wherein you delighted for a moment, for which ye now lament eternally. Nowe what do your treasures auayle you? where is your pompe and pleasure become? the seuen sertyl yeres are nowe ended quite, and in place thereof are nowe succeeded the

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seuen barren yeres, whiche shal so consume the abundance of those which are passed, that there shal not remayne any one shadowe or shewe thereof. Therefore al your former felicitie is drenched and wrapped vp in the waues of wretchednesse, and are nowe driuen to suche straights and scarsitie, that not so much as one drop of water shal be graunted vnto you, wherwith ye might somwhat assuage the raging thirst which vexeth you so furiously: neither shal your wonted prosperitie relieue your miserie, but rather thereby ye shal be more fiercely afflicted. For therein is accomplished this saying of Job, that the sugred soppes of the vngodly shal be at the last deuoured with wormes. Which S. Gregory in his Morals expounded in this sort: The memory of their wonted ioyes maketh their present payne to seeme more bitter, by calling to minde howe braue and frolike they haue bine, and howe base and vile they nowe are come, and howe for loue of that which so sone slipte away, they suffer that which

Job. 21. 24. 25

which neuer shal haue ende. Then shal they perceiue euidently the subtil slightes of the enimie, and beeing called to their accompt, shal mutter to late these sayinges of Salomon: Wo vnto vs wretches, how apparant is it now vnto vs, that we haue strayed from the trade of truth, that the light of iustice hath not shined vpon vs, and that the sunne of intelligence hath not risen ouer vs. We haue walked and weeried our selues in the croked and crabbed way of wickednesse: but we haue not stepped one foote in the playne and easy pathe which leadeth to righteousnesse. What are we nowe abettered by our princely trayne and treasure? All these thinges are nowe vanished as the fleeting shade, and as the swift courser chased vppon the spurre, as a shippe dryuen with the tyde and tempest, whiche leaueth behinde no print of his passage. This and suche like in thinfernal pitte shal be the talke of those whiche haue beene offendours. For that the hope and trust of sinne is like vnto chaffe chased

Sapi. 5.

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with the winde, or as the skumme and frothe of the Sea dispearsed wyth the waues, as the smoke sodenly dissolued into the ayre, or as the remembraunce of a pylgrime passing by the way. These be there the complayntes, and this the perpetual penance of the vngodly, whiche shal not assist them at al, because the time is passed wherin they might haue bene reléeued hereby. Come therefore in the time of grace and repentaunce, and you that haue eares receyne the sounde aduise of our Lorde vttered by the Prophet, saying: Serue and glorifie God before the day be depriued, before the darke night of death steale vppon you, and ere your féete be entrapped, or ye stumble at that foule blacke hyllocke. Therefore take the time and day whilst ye haue it, for it shal be turned into darknesse. And our Lorde him selfe, who better than any other knoweth the deapth of this danger, aduertiseth vs hereof in his Euangelist, saying, Take hede ẏ your hartes be not opprest with too much meate & drink, and with ouer-

Iere. 13.

Luk. 11.

ouermuche care and turmoyle of this worlde, leaſt that dreadful day catch you at vnwares, which wil ſteale vpon you like a thefe, and vpon al thoſe whiche inhabite vppon the face of the earth. Therfore watche and pray continually, that you may be deliuered from theſe huge heapes of calamities, which hereafter wil happen, that you being cleane and vndefiled, may be preſented before the ſonne of the pure Virgin, the promoter of al our auayle and profite.

¶The Argument.

Thoſe which haue loued God, and liued according to his will, shal be revvarded in Paradiſe, which is the glory and merite that good men doo expect. VVhich notwithſtanding any difference that is among the elect, bringeth a cõmon comfort & pleaſure to them al becauſe there is perfect charitie, and God is al and in euery thing. VVherfore no other exerciſe is vſed there, nor no other payne or trauayle, then to loue God, to laude and glorifie him inceſſantly for euer.

The

The.iiij. Chapiter.

NOw that we haue declared ỹ condemnation & sharpe sentence to be pronounced vpon the wretched sinner: it followeth consequently, that we treate likewise of the glorious recompence wherwith the righteous shal be endued, whiche is nought els, but that happie lyfe and kingdome which God hath ordeyned for his chosen people euen from the creation of al things, which is such and so excellent, that neither with the tong of men nor Angels it can be expressed. But that ye may haue some tast of this, heare what S. Augustine briefly sayth in commendation hereof, in a certayne meditation of his, in this sort: O lyfe alotted by God to them that loue him, a liuing life, a life voyde of care, a blessed life, a quiet life, a pleasaunt life, a pure life, a chaste life, a life enimie to death, a life that knoweth no greefe, voyde of molestation, of smart, of anxietie, voyde of al corruption, voide of perturbatiõs, not subiect to variety, change

or mutabilitie. A life ful of beautie and perfection, where no enimie shal molest thee, nor no trespasse offend thee: where is perfecte vnitie, vnfaigned and holy loue: where al feare is far away: where is one eternal day, without alteration: where God is seene face to face, whiche is the fode of al that there abide. Swete God, with an vnsaciable harte and greedy minde, I couet thy hydden treasures, and the more I long after them, the more I luste and burne in desire: considering thee my delight, my life and Sauiour, in contemplation whereof I fele my selfe exceedingly refreshed and reuiued. O moste happie life, O very blessed kingdome, altogether without death, and without ende, whiche doest not yelde to any succession or alteration of times, where is bright day continually, without interruption of night: there it is not knowen what mutation meaneth, where the triumphant souldiour accompanied with a glittering crewe of Angelles, singeth vnto God withoute ceasling the pas-

ſing prayſe of Sion, hauing gotten the crown of euerlaſting felicitie. I would to god that my ſinne, my greeuous guilt were forgeuen me: Thriſe bleſſed were my ſoule, if after this paynefull pylgrimage, I might be worthy to ſée and beholde thy glory, the beatitude, the beautie, the walles, and the gates of thy citie, thy ſtréetes, thy pallaces, thy noble citizens, thy worthy king, ſetled in his throne of magnificence. Thy wals are made of precious ſtones, thy gates are beautified with ſhining pearles, thy ſtréetes are paued with pure golde, whiche reſounde and ring aloude with the peales of perpetual prayſes. Thy houſes are buylded with quadrant ſtones, adorned with Saphyrs, thy beames and rafters are of golde, where no corruption can abyde, nothing may enter that is defiled. O Hieruſalem, our mother, thou art braue and pleaſaunt in thy deuiſes, the force of no aduerſitie is felte in thée, neither any of thoſe diſcommodities are ſuſteyned whiche here we find. Thy ioyes are farre aboue

any

any which this wretched life can yelde vs. In thee is neuer founde night, darknes, nor chaunge of times. Thy light issueth neither from lampe, nor from the Mone, nor yet from the starres, but god the light of al lightes is he which lighteneth thée. The supernal Emperour kéepeth continual residence in the middest of thée, enuironed and assisted with many millions of his ministers. There the angelical quires answere eche to other melodiously: there the fruites of true nobilitie, do yéelde a pleasaunt sent and spectacle to the beholders: there is celebrated the feast of those, who beeing safely arriued from the botomles sea of these miseries and mishappes, are incorporate in one societie with those whiche possesse eternal life: There is the rompany of the Prophetes, the royal ranke of the Apostles, the inuincible hoast of innumerable martyrs: there is the sacred conuent of graue Confessors: there are the true religious, the deuoute women, who despising al delightes and daliaunce, haue conquered their fraple inclination:

clination: There are the virgins and younglings, which with their vertuous industry have shunned the allurements of this vile deceitful world: There are the innocent lambes, who robbing themselues of al earthly pleasures, do nothing skip and leape for ioy, in their proper and peculiar houses. And what soeuer difference there be in glory amongst them, notwithstanding the solace and contentation is common to al: There charitie ruleth being entire and perfect, for that god is al in al, whom they alwayes see, and seeing him continually, are euer enflamed with his loue, therefore they loving praise him, and praising loue him, al their exercise, al their endeuour, is to magnifie him without ceasling or intermission. O howe happy were I, and most happie, if after the dissolution of this corporal prison, I might heare the sweete musical songes of that celestial harmony, and sing psalmes of commendation to the eternal king, of al the worthy company of the moste happie citie. Howe happie should I be, yea twise

thoſe bleſſed if I might attayne to this felicity, to ſing & ſtand before my king, my God, my ſauyor, & to beholde him in his glory, as him ſelfe hath promiſed to be ſene, whē he ſaid: O father, my deſire is, that al thoſe may be with me which thou haſt geuen me, that they may ſee the cleare brightnes which I had with thee before the fundation of the world. And al this is vouched out of S. Auguſtine. Now tel me then what a chereful day ſhal that be, whiche ſhal ſo illuminate and clariſie thy corage, if at the ful conſummation of this pilgrimage, thou paſſe from mortalitie to immortalitie, and in the ſame time that others begin to drope, to doubt and dread, thou ſhalt beginne to lifte vp thy head, becauſe the wiſhed daye of thy redemption approcheth neare. Lifte vp thy mind a litle (ſayd S. Hierome vnto the virgin Euſtochia) out of the dungeon of this corrupt body, and ſetling thy ſelfe before the gate of the heauenly tabernacle, ſkan and conſider well the merit of this thy preſent diſtreſſe, and what a glorious day that day ſhal be vnto thee,

Iohn. 7.

wherin the virgin Mary garded with a
troope of pure virgins, shal be prest to
receiue & weldome thee, and wherin thy
Lord & spouse him selfe, with al his holy
saints, shal mete thee, saying, Come a- Can. 2.
way & folowe me quickly my loue, my
delight, my doue, for nowe the woful
winter is passed, the sharp showres are
ceassed, the tempests & whirlwinds are
appeased, & here spring vp swete fra-
grant flowers in this lande of behest.
This shal be then the delight & consola-
tion that thy soule shal receiue before
the high throne of that most blessed tri-
nitie, before the angels, but specially by
him to whose custody thou were earst
cōmitted, when these & al the rest shal
declare the sundry tribulations, the tra-
uels & persecutions that thou hast suffe
red for ẏ loue of christ. So Luke sheweth Actes. 9.
that when ẏ charitable Tabita deceased,
al the widowes & pore people besought
the apostle Peter in her behalf, shewing
him their garmēts which she had made:
the Apostle being moued therat, prayed
vnto God instantly for so mereifull a

woman, whereby she was restored agayne to life. What a singuler comforte shalte thou then perceyue in thy soule, when those blessed spirites shall take thee, and set thee before the diuine consistorie of God, publishing thy desertes, and resiting orderly thy almes, thy prayers, thy fasting, the integrity of thy life, thy susteyning of wrong, thy pacience in affliction, & temperance in delightes, with al thy other vertues and good dedes whatsoeuer. O what delectation shalt thou then reape of euery good action here atchieued? howe shal the force and valure of vertue be manyfested vnto thee. There humble obedience shal triumph with victorie. There vertue shal be rewarded, and the wel disposed shal be regarded according to their desert. Besides this, what inward and secret solace shal that be vnto thee, whē thou seeing thy selfe ariued in so assured an harbour, shalt haue regarde towards the course of thy daungerous nauigation passed, & shalte see the troubles and tormentes wherein thou liuedst earst,

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the wyles, the ambushes of the enimie, the cruel incurtions of thieues, whiche nowe thou haste escaped. There this where resoundeth this song of the Prophet: Were it not that the Lorde was mindeful of me, my soule shoulde houe hardly auoyded thinfernal habitation. But specially when thou shalt perceiue howe in this world offences are multiplied, howe dayly so many soules discend to hel and damnation, how among such a multitude of castawayes, God would associate thee into the felowship of his chosen people, whiche shal be the inheritours of suche a renowmed kingdome. But that which passeth al this, is, to see the solemne feasts and triumphes which there are helde day by day, for the welcome of their newe brothers, who hauing ouercome the world, finished and performed the race of their pilgrimage, come to receiue the crowne of eternitie. O what ioy shal it be to behold the accomplishment of that which doo apperteyne to the setting up & newe erection of the walles of the noble Hie-

Psal. 93.

rusalem, with what swete embracings and cullinges shal they be welcomed by al the celestial court, seeing them come laden & lugged with the spoyles of the vanquished foe. There they shal enter with the victorious barons, with those worthy women, which haue conquered the world together with their brickle nature. There likewise the vncorrupt virgins, murthered and martyred for their spouse sake Christ Jesu, shal enter with double triumph, that is, with conquest of the flesh and of the world, adorned and crowned with garlandes, fraught with roses and freshe greene flowers, al about their heades. In like maner there litle boyes and gyrles mastering their tender yeres with discretion and vertue, shal come in to receiue the hyre and guerdon of their integrity. Where they shal finde their friendes, knowe their masters, recognise their parentes, and culling and kissing them affectionately, shal heare the glad tydings to be made possessors of eternal felicitie. O how then shal the fruite of vertue taste deliciously, althoughe in

times past the roote therof seemed sowre
and vnsauery. So weete is the shadowe
after noone, the fountayne is pleasant
to the thirsty & weried waifaring man,
sleepe and rest yeelde great comfort to
him that hath trudged and toiled al day:
but farre greater contentation peace
bringeth to the saints, after their weery
warre, securitie after perils, and perpe-
petual repose after infinite trauails.
The broyle of battayle is now appea-
sed, to be armed it needeth not, neither
on the right side, nor on the left. The
children of Israel were armed, when
they went to the lande of promise, but
after they had conquered the countrey,
they layed aside their weapons, and e-
uery of them forgetting quite the feare
and trouble of warre, they al were lod-
ged in the harbour of rest and quietnes,
and enioyed the fruition of long desired
peace. There may ẏ eyes weeried with
lōg watching, receue their quiet sleps.
Now may ẏ subtill serpent attēding to
entrap vs, come out of his ambush: now
may the happy Hierom betake him to

who drawe the night and day one in lamenting his defaultes and treſpaſſes, encountering courageouſly the cruell conflictes of our auncient enimie: there the horrible armours do neuer ſounde of that bloudy beaſt; there is no place for the croked crafty ſerpent; there the venemous Baſiliſke doth not offende the ſight, nor his hiſſing is not hard, but the breath and ſweete ſounde that diſtilleth from the loue of the holy ghoſt, here raungeth rounde about. Where is eſpecially decerned the royall magnificence of God himſelfe. This is the region of reſt and ſecuritie, ſealed aboue al the elementes, where the darke cloudes and filthy vapours do not ouerlap the bright and pure ayre. What happy things are ſayde of thée, O citie of God, happie are they, ſayth Tobias, whiche loue thée, and enioy thy peace. O my ſoule, extol and magnifie God, who hath deliuered Hieruſalem his holy citie frō troubles and vexation. Howe bleſſed ſhould I be, if hereafter in the remnant of my time I might ſée the beautie and

Pſal. 147.

bright-

brightnesse of Hierusalem, whose gates shal be of Saphyrs, and of pollished Smaredges, the circuite of whose wall shal be of pearle and precious stone, the strietes shal be of white marble, interlaced with pure Alabaster, and euery place resoundeth with Alleluia, and boyces of gratulation. O mery, sweete, delectable counsayle, O high renowned glory, O blessed societie, who shal be those happie Christians, picked or sorted out to dwel in thee? it seemeth a harde thing to desire thee, yet no man can liue without this desire. O sonnes of Adam, O wretched generation of men, how sensual and abiect are your thoughts, for if this be the viandes or foode ye ought to fede vpon, what other thing do you labour for? wherabout do you go? what, wil ye loose a benefite so inestimable, rather than ye wil trauel a little? If this may be obteyned with labour and payne, for mine owne part I desire them, I cal and cry to al the trauayles and toyles that may be suffered in the world to come vpon me, that tribu-

tribulations, turmoyle and trouble me at their pleasure, that my body be bored with infirmities of al sorres, and my minde afflicted with sorowe and anxieties: let both the one and the other consume me in greefe, let al the creatures of the world rise vp and impugne me, let me be the reproch of me, the outcast of the world, let my life be spent in dole and distresse, and my yeres finished in wofull wretchednesse: For al this I make no reckoning, so that after I may communicate and haue my part with the Saints in heauen, and may haue eternal rest in the day of tribulation, and may ascende to the people whiche are clothed and adorned with that shining glory. Go to nowe, O foolishe worldling, drudge & toyle for highe titles and dignities, erect lodgings and pallaces, enlarge the limits of thy possession, let kingdomes, and if thou wilte, let the whole world be at thy cõmaundement. yet for al this thou shalt not be so great as the least of Gods seruantes, who receiueth that which the world can not

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gine him, and yet pollesseth eternitie. Thou with thy riches and pyot shalt accompany the riche glutton in the damp of eternall damnation: he with powre Lazarus shal be caried vp with Angels, and conueyed into Abrahams bosome. Luke. 10.

¶ The Argument.

In the paynes of hel the sinner can haue no comfort, for as the lot of the blessed is an vniuersal prosperitie, vvhich in it conteyneth al good things: so the estate of the reprobate, is a general and vniuersall misery, vvhich comprehendeth al euils in it selfe. For there the senses of the conuicted sinner shal be tormented perticularly, one after another proportionally to the crymes they haue committed, vvithout all hope of ende or releasse of their greefe, which shal be eternal, eager, infinite, sharpe, vvithout intermision.

The. 6. Chapter.

THE least parte of these rewardes were ynoughe to styrre vp our earthlye and slumpishe hartes to do muche

more

more then that which we are enioyned vnto by the commaundementes of God. But what if with this glory exceeding al measure, we adioyne in like maner the immesurable punishmentes prouided for the wicked? For that those cannot there be reuealed with this saying, What if I be a castaway? no other inconuenience ensueth thereof, than neuer to see the glory of God, and to be hereafter as though I neuer were, not knowing good nor euil. But they misse in their reckoning, beeing allotted perforce to take one of these vnequal conditions, that is, eyther to be glorified with Angels, or accursed with Diuels: to rule with God eternally, or to burne in hel perpetually. The one of these twayne they must needes elect for the place of their perpetual abode. These be the two baskets which God foreshewed in a figure to the Prophet before the gate of the temple, the one of them filled with delicate and holsome figges: the other ful of such filthy and vnsauery figges, that euery man abhorred to taste

or touch them. Which signifieth nothing els then the odds and difference of two sortes of people: the one is of the chosen, to whom God hath bestowed his mercies bountifully: the other of the abiects, to whom God extendeth the heauy hande of his iustice. And the lot of the first sort is so excellent florishing, and that of the others so woful & wretched, that the greatnes of these two extremes, so muche differing betweene them selues, can not be specified by any wordes. But omitting al other considerations, the state of the happie is an vniuersal felicitie, wherein all good things are conteyned: and contrarywise, the condition of the wicked is the hauen where arriueth al vnhappines, the sourse of sorowe, and harbour of distresse. Al the miseries which are incident to this life, be miseries in special, and therefore do not torment all our members generally, but one or some of them alone. For example hereof, we see some men grieued in their eyes, some in their eares, many in their stomacks, others

others in their bellies, and not a fewe at the very harte. Yet none of these infirmities doo vexe al the sences vniuersally at one instant, but some of them particulerly. Notwithstanding, the smart is oft ful sharpe and vehement, and the night ouer tedious to him that abydeth eyther of these greefes, be it but the aking of a toothe or gumme. Admit nowe that a certayne man should suffer suche an vniuersal punishment, that no member, sence, or ioynt should be free from peculier tormentes, and that at one very instant he must abyde moste bytter paynes in the head, in his eyes, in his teeth, eares, stomack, liuer, harte, and to be shorte, in all the other members and ioyntes of his body, and that he lay in this perplexitie vpon a bedde, feeling the seueral greefes assigned to euery member. What excessiue sorowe shoulde he suffer, thinkest thou, whiche were tormented in this sorte? or what thing coulde be more miserable and pityfull to beholde? if thou sawest a dogge in that distresse, it woulde

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perforce moue thée to compassion. This deare brother (if any comparison may be vsed herein) is that, which not for the space of one night, but for euer, is suffered in the pit that perpetually burneth with fyre & brimstone. For as the vngodly do grieuously offend God with al their sences & members, making them ỹ instruments to further their frantick follies & excesses: so by the ordinance of god, there they are al tormẽted, & euery of them abideth his proper punishment. For there the incontinent eyes shal be afflicted & affraighted with ỹ vgly sight of deuils, the eares with confused cryes and complaints, the nose with the intolerable stenche of that filthy dennę, the taste with raging thirst and famine, the feling, and al the body besides, with percing colde & heate, the imagination shal be tormented with the apprehension of present payne, the memory by hauing stil in mind the pleasures passed, the vnderstãding with cõsideration of ỹ glorious kingdome lost, & cursed condition that is damned. The diuine Scriptures

tures signifieth vnto vs this pluralitie of paynes, where it sayth, that in hell
Mar.15. shal be famine, thirst, weeping, and gna-
Psal.10. shing of teeth, the two edged swoorde, the spirites and creatures of reuenge, serpents, wormes, scorpions, bytes, sawce salages, water distilled of gall, stormy tempestes, and other suche like annoyances. By which it frameth and preferreth to our presence an euident paterne of the diuers and dreadful plagues practised in hel. Finally, there shal be in-
Exod.10. warde and outwarde darknesse, both of the body and minde, farre more obscure than those of Egypt, which might be felt and toucht with the hande. There shal be fire, but not suche as we vse commonly, which smarteth a litle, and banisheth quickly: but such as is most fit for that place, that is, whiche afflicteth vehemently, and neuer ceaseth to torment. If this be true, howe can it be that those whiche beleeue and confesse the same, should liue so lasely, and slepe in suche securitie? What danger, what tedious toyle would not any man glad-

ly vndertake, rather then he would endure one day, yea one howre, the least of these torments? Why then to shun a perpetuitie of calamities so tragical, do they not imploy themselues to so easy trauaile as that which is requisite to the following of vertue? This thing were inough to sequester a mans soule from his sences, and to bring him to an ertacie, that delibereth aduisedly herevpon. Yet if among these huge heapes of miseries, were any hope of ende or redresse, it woulde qualifie somewhat their griping cosies: but alas they find it there farre otherwise, for the gates of comfort are closed vp on al sides. In al kinde of heauinesse that may happen in this life, resteth alwayes some reliefe, wherein the afflicted may repose him selfe, as that which is administred eyther by reason of time, frendes, or company of many whiche do participate with him in the same mishap, or by hope to be released at last, may mitigate their maladie: But in this euyl onely, the cundits of grace are so stop-

ped, and the passages of common comfort so interrupted, that these vnhappy creatures can finde fauour on no side, neither from heauen, neither from the earth, neither of the time passed, nor present, nor of that to come, nor of ought that can be els, but they seeme to be prest and pearsed of al partes, and that al creatures cõspire agaynst them, whereby at last they ware wood and wrath with themselues. This is the extreme straightnes, whereof the wicked bewayle themselues by the Prophet in this sorte: The dread of death hath hedged me in on euery side, and the infernall frightes haue inuironed me round about, in such wise, that whersoeuer they pepe or prye, their obiect is alwayes miserie exempted of mercy. The Virgins whiche stode prest at the pallace of their spouse, were receyued in, as the Euangelist sayth, and sodenly the gates were lockt. O perpetual pinning fast, O immortal inclosure, O gate of comforte whiche neuer shal be opened, whiche is as though he had

Psal. 17.

Mat. 15.

had ſayde, Cloſed is the poꝛte of par-
don, ſhut is the doꝛe and hatche of hope
and interceſſion, of grace, of conſola-
tion, and of meriting any moꝛe. The
ſixe daies are vaniſhed, wherin Manna
was to be gathered, but the Sabboth it
could not be founde, wherfoꝛe he muſt
faſte alwayes, which would not pꝛouide
foꝛ him ſelfe in time. The ydle ſluggard
(ſayth Salomon) fearing the colde,
wil not till his grounde in the winter,
whereby he ſhal begge in the ſommer,
and nothing ſhal be geuen him. And
agayne, He that laboureth in the ſom-
mer and time of harueſt, is diſcrete: but
he that then betakes him to ſleꝛpe, is
the ſonne of peꝛdition. What greater
confuſion can there be than that which
hapned to the riche myſer, who might
haue purchaſed his place in heauen
with the crums of bꝛead that fel frō his
table, by his couetouſnes in deteyning
that litle, is now bꝛought to ſuch penury
himſelf, that he craueth, and ſhal craue
cōtinually one dꝛop of water, & ſhal ne-
uer obteine it. In whoſe hart doth not

requeſt of that wretch moue a remorſe.
Luke.16. O father Abraham, pitie my caſe, and ſende Lazarus, that he may dip the top of his finger in the water, and maye touche my tong therewith, for this fire tormenteth me out of meaſure. What leſſe petition could be demaunded than this: for he durſt not requeſt one veſſel of water, neither would he that Lazarus ſhould wet al his hande, nor his whole finger, (whiche is to be wondred at) but only the top of his finger, and yet it would not be graunted vnto him. By which thou ſæſt howcloſe the gates of grace are ſhutte, and howe farre the prohibition and curſe ſtretcheth which is prepared for the vngodly, ſith they can not get ſo ſmal a matter. In ſuche ſorte that caſt they their gaſtly lokes which way they wil, let them extende their hand to what place them liſt, they ſhal finde no crum of comfort, be it neuer ſo ſmal. And as one fallen into the ſea, plunging in the deapth of the waters, can finde no perfect footing, and often ſtretching out his arme catcheth

and

and graſpeth round about in vayne, being nowe euen ſwalowed in the gulfe: So ſhal it happen to the accurſed crue, to whom the woꝛlde is without any ſtabilitie, foꝛ wading in the waues of ſuch wo and wꝛetchednes, and alwayes ſtriuing with death, without truſt oꝛ ſtay of any ſuccour to leane vnto. Of al the greefes which is ſuffered in that miſchæuous place and harbour of aduerſitie, this is the greateſt, foꝛ if theſe puniſhmentes were determinable by any time, yea though it were a thouſande yeres, oꝛ a hundꝛed thouſande million of yeres, it were ſome kinde of comfoꝛt, foꝛ that which hath end is not altogether to be diſpꝛayſed: but ỹ payne of the wicked ſhal be eternal, and the time of their diſtreſſe ſhal be coequal with the diuine gloꝛy of God: ſo long as God ſhal liue, ſo long ſhal they dye, and when God ſhal ceaſe to be that he is, then ſhal they likewiſe leaue to be that they are. O dying life, O liuing and immoꝛtal death, I know not whether I ſhould cal thee life oꝛ death, foꝛ

if thou be lyke, why dyest thou? if thou be death, howe doest thou still endure? I wil not therfore cal thée the one nor the other, for that neither the one nor the other conteyneth ought that good is. Life hath his limits, & death dureth but for a time, which much auayleth to the allwaging of sorowes, but in thée are neyther boundes nor space at all. What then art thou? Verily thou art the penaunce of lyfe, and the plague of death, for thou hast the sting and torment of death euerlastingly, and of life thou hast the perpetuitie without intermission. God spoyled both lyfe and death of their happinesse, and committed to thée that whiche was left for the perpetual punishment of the vngodly. O cursed confession, O bytter pyl, bereft vtterly of al the benefites and delights that floweth from our swéete sauiour Christ, which is the fode that all wretched sinners fede vpon. I wishe therfore, dere brother, that not sildome thou wouldest erect thy earthly minde to the cõsideration of this eternitie, and

as a beaſt of the woꝛlde wouldeſt ſome-
times make thy repaſt therupõ. Which
that thou mayſt perfoꝛme effectually,
pꝛopone befoꝛe thy eyes of vnderſtan-
ding the affliction that a ſicke man ſuf-
fereth in one nighte, ſpecially if he be
ſeaſed with ſome ſharp infirmity. Mark
I pꝛay thee, how oft he turneth & walo-
weth in his very bed, how he cã take no
kinde of reſt, howe the night ſæmeth ſo
long vnto him that he reckoneth euery
houre of the clock, & each houre ſemeth
a day long. He loketh & longeth foꝛ the
light, which nought oꝛ litle auaileth to
moderat his miſery. Then if this ſoꝛow
be ſo great and inſuppoꝛtable, what
ſhal the payne be of that eternal night
which hath no moꝛning noꝛ dawne of
day. O pꝛofounde darkenes, O night
perpetual, O night accurſed by Gods
owne mouth, the light whiche was
wont to lift vp it ſelfe in the moꝛning,
is not ſæne in thee. Conſider nowe
what a toꝛment it is to liue alwayes
in ſuche a night as this is, not couched
in a ſofte bedde, as a ſicke man is,

but rather in a fornace flaming with fires. What shoulders can be able to abyde these so feruent heates? what hart wil not melt with sorowe, to continue in suche torment for euer? Whiche of you (sayth God by the Prophet) can sustayne that consuming fire, and lyue in that excessiue heate? O dreadful threates, if that a man can not endure possibly to put the toppe of his finger vpon one glowing cole whilst a Pater noster is sayde, howe shal he abide to broyle both body and soule in these eternal flames, whiche are so fierce and vehement, that comparing them to those which here we see in this world, seeme of no more force than fire paynted on the walles? Is there any iudgement in the earth? haue men vnderstanding? do they perceiue the weighte of these wordes and threates? thinke they that those are deuices faigned by Poets? or do they perswade them selues that it toucheth some others, and perteynes not to them? Wherein they are much deceiued, and sottishly fede their fo-

lishe

liche fancy, ſithe it is verified by the eternal truth, ſaying, Heauen and earth ſhal decay, but my worde ſhal neuer want his force and vigour.

¶The Argument.

VVe haue great cauſe to be the ſeruants and affectionate freends of God, as vvel for the giftes of nature beſtowed vpon vs, and the infuſion of grace vvhich vve haue already, and hereafter hope to receiue, as alſo for dread of his vvrath. Among vvhich benefites and graces graunted vnto vs, the Sacramentes are moſte precious. Hauing then receyued ſuche and ſo many benefites of him, vve ought not to shewe our ſelues ingrateful, that al his troubles and trauels ſuffered here in earth, may be for our behoofe and profite.

The.vj. Chapiter.

SOme man peraduenture wyl maruel why I ſhoulde accumulate ſo many reaſons to iuſtifie this that I haue begon, and to confirme an approued veritie, & a thing ſo commenda-

mendable as is the atchiuing of ver-
tue, but this discourse is not addressed
to that end, nor to extinuate any doubt
that may be in a matter so manyfest.
But for that monstrous is the malice
of our corrupt minde, and the conflictes
very cruel whiche striue to destroy the
soueraintie of renowmed vertue, It is
requisite that her bulwarkes be of suffi-
cient strength to beare the brunt and
shocke of al assaultes. But for my bet-
ter prose and progresse of this matter,
it shal not be amisse to adioyne herevn-
to, howe muche we are bounde to the
seruice of God, not onely for hope of the
hire which we expect at his handes, nor
for dread of his iustice, but chefely for
those good things which by him we pre-
sently enioy. For if al creatures im-
brace their benefactors, and brute bea-
stes acknowledge them by whom they
haue bene relæued: yea, if the lawe of
thanks geuing be of such force, that the
fierce Tigres, Lions, and Serpentes,
yelde to her segniorities, and liue vnder
her lore, howe shall I escape to be ac-
counted

counted more cruel than thoſe beaſtes, if I ſhould not loue and magnifie him, who hath bene ſo beneficial vnto me? What is there either in me or without me, which is not iſſued from the bounty of God? Thou Lorde haſt created my ſoule to thine owne image and ſimilitude, thou haſt diſpoſed the organes of my body, and beautified it with ſuche feature and varietie of members and ſences, that regarding wel the curious cunning of the worke, appeareth that it can be wrought by no other artificer than thy ſelfe. Thou haſte and doeſt ordayne dayly al thinges neceſſarie for the preſeruation of this thy worke, thy prouidence is my guyde, thy hande dothe ſuſtayne me, thy creatures ſerue me, thy medicines heale me, thy fode doth nouriſhe me, thy Angelles garde and kæpe me, thy wyſdome inſtructeth me, thy mercy prouideth for me, and thy patience ſupporteth me: Finally, all that I haue are thy gœdes, thy grace, and thy mercy. For who geueth me my eſſence,

to

to be that I am, but thou that art the fountayne of all essence and beeing. By whose benefite doo I liue, if not by thine, which giuest light and life to all them that breath? who giueth me iudgment and vnderstanding, if not thou which art the lampe of eternal light? Therefore what should a man doo for such a one, who hath him so muche his benefactour? Why should he not serue him with al his forces both of body and minde, who hath made him al, and doth preserue him al, both body and soule, and by whose direction he is gouerned altogether? Wherfore if we be so much bounde vnto him for his benefites geuen vs by nature, how can we gratifie him sufficiently for those his giftes of grace? How canst thou counteruayle his curtesie, who amongest so sundry sorts of people and nations of Infidels, hath singled thee out for him selfe, hath created thee a Christian, and hath washed thee with the water that distilled from his precious side, and there hath adorned thee for his sonne, and hath in-

uested

neſted thée with al habites and ornamentes that are requiſite for that dignitie? But after when agayne thou were fallen from this preheminence, who can declare how patiently he dyd holde thée vp, when thou ſinnedſt? with what eyes did he beholde thée when thou madeſt no reckoning of him? how carefully did he garde thée, when thou diddeſt procraſtinate thy returne vnto him? with how many holy inſtincts did he ſtirre thée? with how many harolds did he ſommon thée to come, that at the laſt forſaking thy former follies, ſhouldeſt bowe to his holy will and bent? But what ſhal I ſay of that ſupernal grace, of that moſt excellent benifite of our redemption? O Lorde the heauens bleſſe and extol thée, and the Angelles ſing prayſes of thy meruelous workes. What nede haddeſt thou of our auaile, or how could our annoy be preiudicial vnto thée? If I offende (ſayth Iob) what hurt is it vnto him? and if thine iniquities abounde, what harme taketh he thereby? and if thou dw wel, what is he

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the better therfore. But what commoditie? what reward can he reape at thy hands, who is God omnipotent, so riche and so free, and far from al wracke and wo? that God (I say) whose wealth, whose power, whose wisedome can be neither augmented nor diminished: who neither before the constitution of the world, nor after he had made al things, is one iot more or lesse thē he was before: nor if al the angels and al mankinde should be saued, & should prayse him perpetually, is any whit the worthyer: nor if they al were damned and did blaspheme him, is lesse glorious at al. This so great a lord, not drawen nor driuen by any straightes at al, but of meere grace and bounty, whilst our acts of hostelitie were yet in fresh memorie, was content to encline the heauens of his royal maiestie, and to discende into this caue of calamities, to cloth him with the vesture of our mortalitie, to charge himselfe with the depe debt of al our sins, and for satisfaction thereof, to endure such tormentes as were neuer

ſuffered in this woꝛld. Foꝛ my ſake, O Loꝛde, thou waſt boꝛne in a ſtal, foꝛ me thou waſt laid in a manger, foꝛ me thou waſt circumciſed the eyght day, foꝛ me thou waſt conueyed into Egypt, foꝛ me (to conclude) thou waſt perſecuted and turmoyled with a number of infamies: foꝛ me thou watchedſt, foꝛ me thou trauayledſt, foꝛ me thou ſwetteſt, foꝛ me thou didſt weepe, foꝛ me thou haſt pꝛoued al thoſe euyls which my enoꝛmous cꝛymes haue deſerued, thou beeing innocent and guiltleſſe. Finally, foꝛ me thou waſt appꝛehended as a malefactour, abandoned of thy frends, ſolde, denied, pꝛeſented befoꝛe the tribunall ſeate of thoſe iudges, where thou were accuſed, buffeted, defamed, whipped, ſpitted at, ſcratched, condemned, crucified, blaſphemed, pearced with a ſpeare, dead and buried. Therefoꝛe with what deſert of mine, can I acquite my ſelfe, I wil not ſay of al theſe curteſies, but of the leaſt dꝛop of blod ſhed out of thy holy ſide, foꝛ me vnwoꝛthy wꝛetche. Howe is it poſſible that

I ſhould

I should loue him sufficiently, who so hath loued me, so hath created me, so hath redéemed me, and hath bought me so dearely? If I be lifted vp from the earth (sayth our Sauiour) al thinges shal be drawen after me. But with what chaynes, with what violence? With the force of loue, and with the bondes of his benefites. With the rope of Adam (sayth our Lorde) I wil draw them vnto me, & with the knot of loue. Therefore who will not be lifted vp with this draught? who wil not suffer him selfe to be catcht and caried with such chaynes? If one little drop of water falling continually vpon a stone, wil pearce & breake it at the last, howe shal not the bondes of so many benefits be ynough to rent my stony hart a sunder? And if the very earth wrought in the feruent heat, is sometimes conuerted into fyre, howe shal my hart be frée from burning, béeing so beset with the glowing coles of suche vnmeasurable loue? if it be so haynous an offence not to loue this Lorde, what shal it be to of-

fende

sende him, to despise him, and to transgresse his commaundementes? Howe canst thou haue any hart or hande to offende those handes which haue bene so bountiful vnto thée, whiche for thée were spread vpō the crosse. When that lasciuious woman besought the Patriarke Ioseph that he would betray his master, the holy man repelled her with this saying, Beholde, O wretched woman, what trust my Lorde hath reposed in me, to put al that he hath into my handes, except thée his wife, therefore with what face can I commit this vilanie agaynst my Soueraigne? Whiche is as if he had sayde, If my Lorde hath ben so frendly affectioned towards me, if he hath committed al that he hath to my custody, if in such wise he hath fancied and honoured me, that in me only it resteth to dispose of his affayres: how may I, béeing tyed with the bonds of so many benefites, haue any handes at al to offende a Lorde so liberal? And it doth not content him to say, It is no reason to offende him, but, Howe can I

offende him: for the greatnes of gods turnes do not onely reſtrayne the wil, but in a maner al power and poſſibilitie to annoy the benefactor. And it bindeth faſt both the handes and feete of a man, that he can not ſtriue agaynſt it. Wherfore if theſe kind of ceremonies, as to be grateful for gods turnes, be of ſo great force, what ſhal we thinke of the benefites of God? That man committed to Iosephs fidelitie al his buſines, and God hath put into thy handes al that he hath. Conſider then howe muche Gods treaſures are more worthy than any that Pharao did poſſeſſe, for that ſo muche more is this whiche thou enioyeſt, than was that which Ioſeph did receiue. But tel me what thing hath God, which he hath not geuen into thy hands? heauen, earth, the ſunne, the moone, the ſtarres, the ſea, birdes, fiſhes, trées, beaſts, and finally al that is conteined vnder the golden globe, he hath beſtowed vpon thée: and yet not that onely which is here below in earth, but likewiſe al that is in the heauens aboue,

bone, which is the glory, the riches, and the delightes of Angels and Saintes, which are there praying busily for thy commoditie. Al things (sayth the Apostle) are yours, whether it be Paule, or Apollo, or Peter, be it the worlde, be it life, be it death, be it the time present, or that to come, al is yours, for that al serueth for your behofe: and yet not that alone which is aboue the heauens, but the lord of heauen himselfe, hath geuen vs his onely sonne, after sundry sortes, sometimes as a patron, sometimes as a defendor, somtimes as a sauiour, sometimes for a teacher, somtime for a Phisition, sometime for a rewarde, sometime for a conseruation, sometime for a remedie, and for ech other our nede. The Father hath geuen vs his sonne, the sonne hath merited for vs the holy Ghost, the holy Ghost hath made vs meritorious of God the Father him selfe, from whom floweth the streames of al felicitie. Therefore if this father (as the Apostle sayth) hath giuen vs his onely sonne, whiche was Paule.

the greatest gift he could bestow on vs) howe wil he not deliuer vnto vs with him al other things whatsoeuer. Therfore if it be true that God hath geuen vnto thée al ý he hath, if he hath wrapt thée fast with obligation of so many benefites: howe is it possible that thou shouldest molest or greue so liberal and bountiful a benefactour? If it be a grieuous crime, not to be thankeful for so good turnes: what shal it be to adioyne to ingratitude the contempt & offence of the benefactour? If that young man founde him selfe in such bondage, and so impotent to annoy him who had committed to his fidelitie the charge of his house: what hart or courage canst thou haue to offende him, whiche for thy behofe hath created both heauen & earth? O more vngrateful thã the very beast, O more cruel than the Tigres, O more insensible than the sensleste creatures, not to consider so great a fall: for what beast, what Lion, what Tiger, did euer hurt the man that did them good?

Saint Ambrose writeth, that a dogge

all

al one night howled and bewayled his maister, whiche was slayne by his enimie: whither repayring many the next morning, to viewe the dead corps, amongst whom the murderer also made his appearaunce, whom so sone as the dog behelde, furiously ranne vpon him, in such wise that the malefactour was detected thereby. Wherfore if a dogge for a péece of bread did shewe such loyal loue to his master: howe canst thou become so vngrateful to suffer thy selfe in the lawe of reason and humanitie, to be inferiour to a dog? If that beast was wroth against him that had slaine his maister: what wilte not thou be wroth agaynst them that haue kylled thy Lorde and Soueraigne? and who are those that haue killed him but only thy offences? these are euen they that toke him, that bounde him, that whipped him, that nayled him to the crosse. For al the tormentors had not ben sufficient for this exployte, had they not bene assisted by thine offences? Wherfore then doest thou not ware wood a-

gaynſt theſe ſo cruel murderers which haue beréaued thy Lorde of his life. Wherfore ſéeing him dead in thy ſight, doth not thy affection increaſe towards him, & thy wrath towards ſinne, which hath kylled him, knowing that whatſoeuer in this world he hath ſaid, done, or ſuffred, was to imprint ſuch an hatred in our harts agaynſt ſin, that we ſhould deteſt it vtterly. To ſlay ſinne he dyed him ſelfe, and to binde it hand and foote, hath ſuffered himſelfe to be bound vpon the croſſe. Why then wilt thou make fruſtrate al the labours and paynes of Chriſt? Wilt thou runne headlong into the thraldome & bondage frō whence Chriſt hath deliuered thē with the ranſome of his precious blood? why doeſt thou not tremble and ſhéuer at the only name & ſounde of ſin, now that thou haſt ſéene the extremities that Chriſte vſed in the remouing thereof? what could God do more to reſtrayne vs frō ſinne, then to ſet him ſelfe before vs bowed pitifully vpon a croſſe? who durſt diſpleaſe God, if he ſawe heauen and

earth

earth open before him: yet much more it is to see God stretcht vpon a crosse, than al this. Wherefore, whosoeuer is not stirred with this motiue, there is nothing in the wide world whereby he may be reduced from the fonde and perillous iourney wherin he is entred.

¶ The Argument.

God doth not suffer those to vvant any thing necessarie to this vvorld, vvhich be righteous, and doo kepe his commaundements, but doth comfort them vvith his graces and giftes infinitely, as vvel temporal as spiritual, present, as those to come. VVherof the vngodly haue exceeding great scarsitie, for that noble vertue is euermore associated vvith all good things, and contrarivvise, vice vvith mischeefes and miseries.

The. vij. Chapiter.

But peraduenture thou wilte say, that al these thinges before treated of are right iust, as wel the good things as the

yet desirest to se some present motiue, which should serue to eleuate thy hart, sithe the thinges obiected to our dayly vie we, do more vs more forsibly. Of these thinges also we will geue thee thy glut, and thou shalt haue thy sacietie of that thou desirest. For admit our Lord had kept the best wine and meate tyll the ende of the banket, yet for al this he wil not that his seruaunts should faint with famine by the way: for he knoweth very wel if they should be so scanted, they cannot continue in their iourney. Wherfore he sayd vnto Abraham, Feare not, O Abraham, for I am thy defendour, and thy reward shall be great. By these words two things are promised, one in this present lyfe (as he was his defendour in al things perteyning therevnto) the other in the life to come, which is the guerdon reserued for him. But howe great the first promise is, and how many sweete solaces it conteyneth, no man knoweth but he that hath read the Scriptures diligently, which inculketh and repeateth

nothing

nothing more then the singuler preroga-
tiues which our Lorde hath promi-
sed to his seruauntes in this life. Read
the holy Psalme of the Prophet, Domi- Psal.25.
nus regit me: Reade, Qui habitat in ad- Psal.91.
iutorio: Regarde with thy vnderstan- Psal.18.
ding, Diligam te domine fortitudo mea:
reade the benedictions and the curses
of Deuteronomium: finally, reade the
newe and old testament, and thou shalt
see apparantly what fauour and frend-
ship is promised to the iust and righte-
ous in this life. Heare the verdit of Sa-
lomon in his Prouerbs vpon this mat-
ter, Blessed is the man that hath found
wisedome, for it auayleth more to pos-
sesse that, than all the heapes of golde
and siluer, be it neuer so fine and preci-
ous: it is of greater price than al the
riches of the world, and al that can be
wished for, and desired in the harte of
man, is nothing comparable thereunto.
The length of his daies are in his right
hand, and in his left are riches and glo-
ry, his wayes are fayre, and his pathes
peaceable, and to al them that obteyne
it,

it,and to euery one that with perſeue-raunce ſhal enioy it, ſhal be happye. Mark then,my ſonne,the conſtitutions and counſels of God, for this ſhal be li-kings and life to thy ſoule. Then ſhalt thou take thy iourney voyde of care, and thy fæte ſhal not fayle thée: if thou ſlæpe thou ſhalt not be affrighted,and if thou betake thée to reſt,thou ſhalt haue a quiet repoſe. This (deare brother) is the ſolace and quietnes that the right-eous haue in their wayes: but conſider howe muche the wayes of the wicked differeth from this by the ſentence of the ſcriptures: vnhappines, & luckleſſe chaunce is euer in their way, neyther know they what it is to tread the ſteps of peace and tranquilitie. And againe Eccleſiaſtick ſayth,The path of the vn-iuſt is ful of lets & obſtacles, and at the ende of their iourney for an harbour is addreſſed for them, hel, darkneſſe, and payne. Doth it ſéeme nowe good vnto thée to diuert from the way of God, to follow the way of the world, béeing ſo contrary ech to other, not onely in the

ende,

end, but alſo in the midway, and at euery ſtep: Which then is the greater inconuenience, to endeuour through one torment to get another torment, or els with one repoſe to atchieue another repoſe: But that thou mayeſt diſcerne more clearely the manyfolde benefites whiche preſently do accompanie thys good thing, be attentiue to the promiſe that God him ſelfe made to the Prophet Eſay, to the obſeruers of his commaundementes, in theſe wordes, according to the intent of diuers Interpreters: When thou ſhalt be (ſayth he) ſuche and ſuche, as I haue willed thée to be, vnwares ſhal come vpon thée the dawne of bryghte day (that is the light of iuſtice) whiche ſhal caſt out and baniſhe quite the dyery darkneſſe of thy errours and defaultes, and ſhalte quickely knowe true health, and the equitie of thy weldoinges ſhall ſtande before thée as a burning lampe, and the glory of our Lorde ſhal enuiron thée on euery ſide, that thou mayſt be honoured in the ſight of God

and

and men. Then shalt thou cal vpon the name of our Lorde, and he wyl heare thée, because thou louedst him, and shal say vnto thée, beholde me here prest to accomplish whatsoeuer thou canst aske. Then in the middest and déepe darkenesse of the tribulation and distresse of this life, the comfortable beames of diuine fauour shal shine vpon thée, and thy tribulation shal be as the midst of the day, for that our Lord had ordeyned that thy miseries them selues, and thy transgressions passed, should accumulat vnto thée greater felicitie, presenting alwayes to thy minde assured peace, and firme tranquilitie. And in the time of scarsitie and famine he shal fede thée ful, and shal supply thy wants aboundauntly, and thy bones shal be deliuered from death, and from the flames of eternal fyre, and thou shalt be like vnto a moyst garden, and as a fountayne which runneth incessantly, and in thée that shal be accomplished which many yeres hath bene vnfinished, to the ende thou mayst stande vpon a sure founda-

tion,

tion, from generation to generation. and if thou wilt endeuour to celebrate my festiual dayes, not contriuing them in foolishe delightes, nor in preferring thy wil before mine, obseruing carefully my wil and behest in this voyage: then will I create thée a Lord, and wil geue thée such solaces as shal farre surpasse al pleasures of the world. And I wil exalt thée aboue the highest turrets of the earth, to a moste blessed state of life, whervnto neither fortune nor humaine nature can add or detract ought at al. And after al this I wil enstal thée into the precious inheritaunce that I promised to Iacob thy father, which is the benediction of glory, because the mouth of god hath spoken it. These are the rewards which god promised to his seruantes, of which although some are yet to come, notwithstanding many of them perteyne to this present life. As is that new light and heauenly brightnes, that abundãce of al things, that assured trust in god, that diuine assistance to al petitions and demaundes, that

peace

peace and securitie of conscience, that diuine prouidence and protection, that flourishing garden (whiche is the decking and garnishment of grace) the fountayne which floweth continually, which is the great plenty of al things, those supernal ioyes which excæde the capacitie of man, that lifting vp of the spirite whiche can not be augmented by any assistance of humaine nature. These fauours and prerogatiues promised by God, are al the workes of his mercy, the influence of his grace, the testimonies of his loue, the effect of the fatherly prouidence he extendeth to his seruauntes. Vpon euery one of these I could say much more then the breuitie of this volume wil permit, for that euery of them would aske a seueral Treatise. Wherefore the iust shal reioyce of al these good thinges, both in this life, and in the life to come, whereof the vniust shal be vtterly destitute. By which meanes marke what odds is betwirt the one part and the other, nowe that these are so fauoured from heauen, and

those

thoſe in ſuch diſtreſſe and penury, for if thou cõſider aduiſedly al things before treated of, & doeſt waygh the eſtate and condition both of the iuſt and vniuſt, thou ſhalt finde that the lot of the righteous is in the fauour of God, but that of the vngodly in vtter diſgrace: theſe are his frẽndes, the other his profeſſed foes: theſe enioy the light, the other dwel in darknes: theſe participate in delight with Angels, thoſe with dyrye ſwine: theſe are frẽ in dẽde, & maſters of thẽ ſelues, thoſe other the thrals and vaſſals of Satan: theſe liue in vnitie, thoſe other in deadly diſcord: the truſt and teſtimonie of a falſe conſcience delighteth theſe, and to the others minds reſorteth alwayes the guylt of their filthy facts: theſe with a reſolute minde abide the brunt of tribulation in their accuſtomed place, thoſe other as light chaffe are repelled by the winde: theſe depende vpon the anker of hope, thoſe other haue no ſtay to leane vnto, beeing obiected to euery chaunce and chaunge of fickle fortune: the prayers of theſe

The eſtate of the good and of the euyl.

are acceptable to the eares of the Lord, the others petitions are odicus & execrable. The death of theſe is quiet and glorious with diuine honour, and that of the others troubleſome, defamed, fraught with a thouſand feares. Finally, theſe liue as children vnder the gard and gouernment of God, they ſlæpe ſecurely vnder the wings and ſhadow of his prouidence: but the others excluded from this diuine protection, wander to & fro as ſcattered beaſtes without head or guide, thruſt out to apparãt perils and alaroms of fortune. Then if ſuch and ſo excellent perfections do accompany vertue, what reſtraynt can there be, why thou ſhouldeſt not imbrace ſo ſoueraigne a thing? what canſt thou alleage for thy excuſe herein? To wrangle and ſay, this is not true, cannot extenuat thy guylt, ſæing thou ſæſt howe it is founded vpon the infallible worde of God, and teſtimonies of the ſcripture. To ſay theſe perfections are of ſmal price, auayleth not, for that (as I haue before mentioned) they excæde

all

al that mans hart can with for. To alleage that thou art thine owne enimie herein, and that thou doeſt not deſire theſe good things, is moſt vntrue: for a man is by nature a freende to him ſelfe, and humaine will hath felicitie for hys ſubiect, which is the ende of his deſires. To affirme that thou haſt no ſence nor taſt hereof, ſufficeth not to acquite thy crime, conſidering thou beléeueſt them to be true, although thou canſt not taſt them. Originall ſinne bereeued thée of thy taſt herein, but not of thy fayth, and fayth is a teſtimonie more ſure, more ſecure, and more doubtleſſe, than al other experiences, witneſſes, and warrantes of the worlde. Wherefore then doeſt thou not preferre this teſtimonie before al the other allegations? Why doeſt thou not attribute more to fayth, than to thine owne ſottiſh ſéeming and iudgement? O that thou wouldeſt determinately commit thy ſelfe into the handes and armes of God, and truſt to him onely, how ſodenly ſhouldeſt thou perceyue in thy ſelfe the accompliſh-

ment of these prophesies, shouldest sone
see the greatnes of these treasures,
shouldest see how senles and blinde all
worldlings are, which dw neither fele
nor fancy this felicitie, and shouldest see
with howe iust reason God commaun-
ded vs this kinde of life, saying, Come
vnto me al ye that are laden and wery,
and I will ease your greefe. Receyue
my yoke vpon you, and then ye shall
finde comforte in your soules, for it is
ful sweete and delectable. God is no de-
ceyuer, his promises are neither false
nor fraudulent. Which sith it is so in
deede, why doest thou flee or faynt? why
doest thou abandon peace and pleasure?
wherefore despisest thou the allure-
mentes and sweete soundes of thy pa-
stor? howe darest thou to chase vertue
from thee, hauing such a gallant super-
scription, as here thou sest grauen by
the hande of God? It was muche lesse
than this, that Queene Sabba had
heard of Salomon, and yet she came
from the vttermoste partes of the earth
to trye whether those things were true

which

which were reported vnto her. Wherefore then hearing ſuch and ſo certayne tidinges of vertue, doeſt thou not betake thée to a litle trauayle? If thou wilt be aſſured hereof, graunt thy ſelfe vnto the worde of God, and confidently commit thy ſelfe into his handes, loſe thy ſelfe from the bondes whiche hath wrapt and wonne thée, and thou ſhalt ſée that the fame of vertue is leſſe than her merite, and that whatſoeuer we haue ſayde is nothing in compariſon of that ſhe is in her proper effect.

¶ The Argument.

To perſeuer in ſinne vvith a thouſande excuſes and delayes, intending to amend his life hereafter, deceyueth a Chriſtian meruayloufly. For by this meanes he blindeth and burieth him ſelfe in the durtie dounghill of vyce, and vvaxeth dayly more prone therevnto, in ſuche vviſe, that iniquitie taking deepe roote in the intrails of his minde, vvyl very hardly be remoued.

The.viij.Chapter.

NOtwithstanding al these assertions whereby the condition of vertue is iustified sufficiently, the wicked will neuer want their wonted excuses and delayes: for as it is written, He that wil shake off his friend, seeketh for a cause of quarel, but in so doing he meriteth a grieuous reprehension and controlment. Yet some there be whiche with one onely worde will easily reply to al this, saying, It sufficeth them to amend hereafter, and then to reduce the course of their life to a better order: foolishly feyning to themselues that it is to hard a matter presently for them so to do, and that in time to come they may attempt & atchieue this thing with more facilitie: whiche is one of the grossest errours wherewith a man may delude him selfe. For if thou myndest so long to proceede and perseuer in that perilous path wherein thou art entred, still augmenting the heape of thine iniquities, howe canst thou so easily hereafter

How fondly a man deceyueth him selfe.

ter forsake it at thy plesure, thy naughtie conditions béeing growen by continual custome into an habite: Further, if thou continue herein, euil custome shal be more fortified and confirmed, and nature shal be corrupted the more, and the diuell shal preuayle and haue more power vpon thée, and shalt be still farther from the fauour of God, and consequently more blinde, more enclyned and plunged déeper in the stinking puddle of iniquitie. Then howe can it be more easy for thée to performe this businesse, béeing encreased with these newe difficulties, by reason of thy perseueraunce in sinne. If euery time that thou doest offende, thou leauest behinde thée a dayes iourney of thy voyage towardes vertue: howe canst thou more readily frame thy selfe therevnto hereafter, hauing let slip so many dayes iourney as thou hast committed offences? It may wel appeare that by this answere thou art instructed by the father of lyes and falsehood, that after thou hast so long inured thy selfe to vice and

folly, and haſte runned a race ſo farre from the trade of vertue, ſhal then be moſt eaſy for thée to attayne therevnto. But among theſe things what ſhal I ſay of the great power of cuſtome and of the force ſhe hath to binde and wrap thée faſt in wickednes. For true it is, that as they whiche faſten a nayle in any thing, with euery ſtroke they driue it further in, and yet with other ſtrokes further, and ſo the more ſtil they ſtrike, the more they faſten it, and wareth thereby the more harde to pul out agayne: In like maner by ethe euyl fact we commit, vice, as it were with a bytle, is more déeper rammed into our minde, where it is fixed ſo faſte that there can very hardly be founde any force able to remoue it. Whereby we ſée not ſeldome that the old age of thoſe who in their flouriſhing yeeres were wholly geuen to carnality, is often ſubiect to the diſſolute manners of their youth, yea although they then abhorre them, and nature thereof diſclaymeth vtterly: which onely commeth to paſſe

through the tyrannie of euyl custome. For it is affirmed by Job, that ỹ bones of the wicked shal be ful of those vices that they vsed in their youth, which shal accõpany them in their graues, in such sort, that vice hath no other ende than death, which isỹ dissolutiõ & extinguishment of al mortal things, which onely suffiseth to redresse and cure it. And the cause hereof is custome confirmed, whiche nowe is growen to nature. For vicious appetites taking such roote in the bones & bowels of their soule, is euen like vnto a ioynt ague, whiche hauing setled it selfe in the intrails of a man, is become incurable. The very same thing is shewed by our Sauiour in the resurrection of Lazarus, which had lien dead nowe fowre dayes, whom God called agayne to life with suche vehement shrikes and cryes: notwithstanding he raised many from death before, with suche facilitie, thereby to make it knowen vnto vs what a wonder it was that God raysed him agayne, who fowre daies had bene dead and buryed. Job. 10.

This long ſince is eſpied to be in ſinne. For (as Saint Auguſtine openeth this place) of theſe foure dayes, the firſt is the delight we haue in ſinne, the ſecond is the conſent of minde, the thirde the accompliſhment in dæde, the fourth the perſeueraunce in ſinne: and he that is come to this poynt, is Lazarus lying dead foure dayes, who can not be reuiued but with the loude lamentations and teares of our Sauiour. If peraduenture this chaunce vnto thée (which very ſeldome happeneth to any) tel me what lawe canſt thou alledge for thy lewdeneſſe, that God before all worlds hauing loued and created thée to inueſt thée with the glory of eternal felicitie, wilt not conſume in the ſeruice of him who hath bene thy benefactour & friend ſo long, this ſhorte and brickle life that thou enioyeſt.

¶ The Argument.

Repentaunce ought not to be deferred to the ende of lyfe, for then God doeth ſeldome graunt them his grace to dye

vvel. For he that hath ledde a levvde life, hath commonly a vvorſe death, and ſo findeth a righteous recompence for his vniuſt deſertes.

¶ The.ix.chapter.

BVt ſome there be ſo blinde and ſhameleſſe, that it ſuffiſeth them not to haue ſinned al their life paſſed, but they reſolue with them ſelues wilfully to wallowe therein, vntill they ſenſibly fæle them ſelues aſſited with the very ſommons of death. O dreadful time, ful of perplexitie, what thinkeſt thou with this price to purchaſe the kingdome of heauen, and to merite the ſocietie and ſeate of Angels? Doeſt thou not ſæ that whatſoeuer is done at this time is neceſſitie, and not wil, is forced, and not frée, is conſtraint, and not conſent, is feare, and not friendſhip: yet it is loue, not the loue of God, but ſelfe loue, whiche ſhunneth naturally his owne annoy. Doeſt thou not perceyue that theſe thinges are méere oppoſite to the rule of equitie, that thou hauing dedi-

cated

cated the whole tearme of thy life to deuotion of the diuell, wilt in the ende require to be rewarded of God? Doest thou not behold herein euen that which the fiue foolishe Virgins did prepare, whereof the Euangelist sheweth, that they were making them ready when they shoulde haue giuen vp their accomptes? Therefore howe canst thou expect any better successe, than thou art admonished by this example, continuing in the selfe same carefulnesse. God is mightie, & can inspire vpon vs true repentaunce when he list, but how often it happeneth at this howre, and howe fewe they be which then repent hartily, aske S. Augustine, S. Ambrose, S. Gregory, and al other Saintes, and thou shalt sée howe precisely and scrupulously they speake in this matter, and thou shalt wel perceyue what a madnes it is, so confidently to commit thy selfe to the mercy of a gulfe, whereunto so many skilful Pilots did passe. with such great honour and feare. To dye wel is a knowledge which ought to

be

be learned al the life before, for in the howre of death the diſeaſed is cumbred with ſo many cares & griefes, that he hath no leyſure to learne to dye wel. It is a general rule, that as the life is of euery man, ſuche is his death. Wherby it foloweth, that if the life be miſchieuous, the death is miſerable, except god for ſome ſpecial purpoſe doth diſpoſe it otherwiſe. Theſe be not my wordes, but the Apoſtles ſayings, The ende of the vngodly ſhal be like vnto their deſerts. For ſpeaking generally, neyther do we looke for a good ruent of wicked beginniges, nor of good attemptes euyl happes. Reade ouer the whole Byble, and thou ſhalt not finde any thing repeated ſo oft as this, What ſæde a man ſoweth, ſuche crop ſhal he gather: and that in the extremitie of death the vniuſt ſhal reape the fruite of their trauails: and that God will impart to euery man according to his merites: & that the death of euery man ſhal be conformable to the life he hath lead: and that the iuſtice of the righteous man ſhal be vpon

The death of the wicked is conformable to their life.

vpon his head, and the curse of the vngodly vpon his head, likewise with a thousande suche like sentences. If all the diuine scriptures might be powred out, to sée what woulde issue thereof, scarse any thing would appeare more often to our vewe than this.

Wherefore if thy workes be wicked, and thy life likewise, what other thing can we prognosticate thereof, but that the ende wil succéede as the beginning and middle hath bene? What thing els shal we thinke him to gather in the other life, but corruption, who in this life hath sowen nothing els but corruption? Peraduenture as our Sauiour sayth, we may gather roses of thornes, figges of furbushes. &c. If the house of the wicked, as Salomon sayth, declineth towards death, and his foote pathe leadeth directly to hell, what other port can be expected after this nauigation, but euen suche an ende as where the wall or trée shal fal, whiche bendeth to one side, but in that part whither it boweth moste. For he whose life, whose

doings,

dwings, whose thoughts hath bine their onely regarde to hel, (for that they haue al deserued it) where shal he settle him selfe after al this, but euen there right: where shal he haue his habitation, if not in outwarde darkenes, whiche alway walked in inward darkenes: how wouldest thou bring to passe that in the ende of his iourney he should ariue in heauen, which hath alwayes pursued the beaten path that lyeth straight to hel.

¶ The Argument.

VVe ought not to abuse the mercy of god, perseuering in sinne vpon cõfidence thereof. For if Gods mercy can suffer so many infidels in the vvorlde, and in the Church so many vvicked Christians, and that al those should be cast avvay quite: he vvil also suffer that euery one vvhich still remayneth in sinne, shal perishe eternally.

The .x. Chapiter.

AND if on the other side thou say, that great is the mercy of God, which doth enbolden thee in suche sorte

that

that continuing in thy naughtie lyfe, art yet assured of thy saluation. But tel me, howe canst thou offer greater iniurie to the mercy of God, than of his benevolence to take occasion to displease him? Who taught thée to argue in this sorte, that because God is good and gracious, thou shouldest haue leaue to be vngracious, and to merite heauen therby. The holy Ghost neuer taught thée this kinde of reasoning, but rather in this fashion, That God béing so good, ought to be honoured, obeyed, & imbraced, aboue al other thinges: wherfore sith God is pityful, it is good reason that in him I shoulde repose my whole trust and confidence that he wil pardon my trespasses, be they neuer so haynous, so that I detest them vtterly, turning my selfe vnto him with a sincere harte. But proceéding alwayes in sinne, beléeue it wel he will not abeare it, yea he will condemne thée and hate thée the more, whom he suffereth so long. Thou canst not gayneſay me, that of an hundred partes of the worlde

there

there is scarse one repleated with Chri-
stians, and that of nientie and nyne
which abide in the worlde, none are sa-
ued. For as in the tyme of that great
flood none was saued out of the Arke of
Noe, nor out of the house of Rubb,
none escaped of those which dwelt in
Hierusalem: so none can be saued out
of the house of god, which is his Church,
euen that which we call Christianitie.
Beholde in what pikle and perpleritie
it standeth in these dayes, and thou
shalte finde for certayne, that in this
whole mysticall body from top to toe
is scarse any thing entire and sounde.
Set aparte some principall Citie
where discipline taketh place, & range
abroade through al townes and other
places, where (as I sayde) is no talke
of discipline, and thou shalte finde
muche people, of whom maye be veri-
fied that whiche God sayde touching
Hierusalem: Search al the stretes and
houses of Hierusalem, and if thou
shalt finde one iust man, for his sake
I will haue compassion vpon the Citie.

Range

Range abroade (I say not now through Innes and markets, for that these are places dedicated to deceit) but through the best Citizens houses. As Jeremie sayth, Listen thy eares to that they speake, and thou shalt hardly heare one good worde, but bitter backbytings and murmure shal fill thy eares. Their disorder, their othes, their blasphemie, laughter, discorde, threates, and of all sides both hart and tongues, debate of earthly drosse and gayne, but very sildome of God and good things, but altogeather in swearing and forswearing his holy name, which is the memory he hath left vnto vs. The same Prophet saying, Let them be mindful of me, but not in swearing falsly by my name, in suche sort, that by the external shewe a man can scarce coniecture whether that nation be Christian or heathen, except it be by the sound of belles, and ruthful rage of swearing & forswearing, which ringeth rounde about, wherein they exceede al Infidels. Then howe can these be vnited to the number of those of

whom

whom Esay speaketh in this wise, All they that behold this people shal quickly knowe them to be the plantes to whom god gaue his benediction. Wherfore if suche ought to be the life of a Christian, that al they whiche beholde him, may sone iudge him to be the son of God, in what sort shal we deeme of those which seeme rather scoffers and contemners of Christ, than Christians in deede? If this then be the life of these, what hope can we haue of their saluation, according to the general rule we haue set downe before? Al this is spoken that thou mayst perceyue, if God, notwithstanding his so great mercy that thou alleagest, suffereth so many Infidels in the world, and so many euil Christians in the church, and if al these infidels do perishe, and so many Christians too, he will also be contented that thou shalt perishe with them, if thy life be conformable to theirs. But peraduenture the heauens were fauourable to thy birth, and therewith al the commaundementes of God were altered,

and the lawe of his Gospel and of his iustice, that for thy sake should be made an innouation of al things. With this pitie he suffered the fal of Angels, and the transgression of our first Parentes, and with them the blot of humaine generation, and destruction of the whole worlde, with the great floud, and the dreadfull desolation of Hierusalem, of Babylon, of Niniuie, and of many other noble Cities and Prouinces. And with this he suffred also that hel shoulde be enlarged, and that dayly so many millions of soules should tumble thither: And wil he not suffer likewise that thine shal passe the same way, liuing as disorderly as they did before thee? But thou mayst obiect, that then God was rigorous, and is become now more milde and curteous, and yet with this pitie & clemencie he hath suffred al that thou hast hard, to the end that thou shouldest likewise feare thy fal, although thou be a Christian, whilest thou arte wicked. Sith it is certayne that fruytlesse fayth is not the instrument of sal-

uation,

uation, but the cheefest matter of aggrauate damnation. Perchaunce gods glory shal be lessoned if thou enter not therein, Or art thou of such power that God standeth in neede of thee, and must beare with thee perforce? Or hast thou any bill of his hande, whereby he is bound to bestow vpon thee such passing priuileges? If the children of Dauid which were priuiledged by the merite of their parentes, God did not spare to punish them according to their deserts, for that they offended grieuously in his sight, so that many of them died miserably in his disgrace: whence haste thou this confidence so to assure thy selfe of thy safetie? Thou doest erre, deare brother, yea thou offendest, if thou take this to be trust & hope in god: this is not hope, but playne presumption, for that which we cal hope, is, to beleeue that a man repenting & forsaking sin, god wil forgiue him al his grieuous crimes: but thine is presumption, if thou beleeuest that persisting still in wickednes, shalt not fayle of thy saluation.

¶ The Argument.

To ſay that the loue of the vvorlde is the cauſe of ſinne, is a vayne excuſe, proceeding from a corrupt & carnal Chriſtian, vvho hath no taſte nor ſent of ſupernall bliſſe. VVherefore he abiecteth thoſe vvhich are true and ſincere, and ſearcheth buſily after falſe, frayle, and momentall pleaſures, which preſently he pereeyueth not. Then ſhould he knovv the deceipt and danger of them, and hovve perfect good are the ſpiritual delightes.

¶ The .xi. chapter.

BVT perhaps thou wilt ſay, that the loue of the woꝛlde hath thy hart and handes faſt harlde with the fetters of her flouriſhing vanities, and that ſhe it is that maketh thée to decline from thy wel attempted voyage. This is the excuſe of one that hath not taſted of the ſpiritual delights, and therfoꝛe deſireth coꝛpoꝛal comfoꝛt. The country clowne déemeth that there is no bꝛauer palace anye where than his rude cotage at home, foꝛ that he neuer ſawe the loftie

turrets

turrets and curious workmanſhip of Caſtles and Cities. The litle babe wofully weepeth being deſcended from his mothers womb, becauſe he is ignorant yet howe muche this worlde is better whither he commeth to dwel, than the priſon where he was pent before. Our firſt parentes made great reckoninges of their villages and houſes made with ſtrawe, before they eſpied the braue buildings framed with timber & ſtone. To whom we may wel reſemble all ſenſual men, who hauing yet no taſte of ſpiritual ſpices, nor proued their ſap, their ſweetneſſe, their beautie, dignitie, and nobilitie, couet more greedily the ſhadowes and ſhewes of happynes, becauſe they knowe not any part of perfect felicitie in deede. For if they had any true knowledge hereof, it were impoſſible but that they ſhould vtterly deſpiſe al ſenſual ſolace. According to this ſaying of the prophet Eſay, In that day thou ſhalt deteſt al ſiluer and golde, and the ydols which earſt thou didſt adore, euen as durty ragges of no reputation,

Eſay. 13.

and shalt say vnto them when thou art clensed, Depart from me, get you out of my house, in suche sorte as men contemne their false gods, after they know the omnipotent God: So wyll they reiect the vanities of the worlde, so sone as they haue a smacke of the true celestial blisse. For (as Saint Barnarde sayth) at the first taste of spiritual comfort, al flesshe from whence issueth eache earthly delight, leeseth his sente. For this is that Syren song, that dreame of Sirces, which hath bewitched so many wretches. But in opening this deceipt, another fraude that lurked erst, appeareth in sight, which is, that they are not onely ignoraunt of the spiritual blisse, but also of the temporall ioyes themselues: for if they knew them throughly, it is not possible that they shoulde lyke them so wel as they do. For tell me, what is the world and al the iolitie thereof, (if with incorrupte eyes ye rightly regarde it, his guise, his beginning and progresse) what is this world I say, other than a heape of wo, a schole

of vanitie, a market of deceipt, a bot-
tomlesse pit of errours, a prison of dark-
nesse, alwayes infested with theeues,
a durtie dunghill, a sea of stormy trou-
bles. This worlde (as the Philosopher
sayde) is a barren lande, a stormy fielde,
a wood of thornes, a greene medowe
ful of serpentes, a gallant garden, but
fruitlesse vtterly, a fountayne of vayne
thoughtes, a pleasaunt poyson, a fable
finely framed, a delighting frenzie:
what good thinges are therein, whiche
be not altogether false and frayle, and
what euill thinges are incident to it,
which be not tryed to be true? his pur-
pose is restlesse, his securitie without
safetie, his paynes to no purpose, his
teares auaileth not, his intent without
euent, his hope frustrate, his mirth fay-
ned and forced, his dolours to be true,
is order ful of disorder and confusion.
So that deare brother, take it for vn-
faigned veritie, that the quiet and con-
tentment which thou expectest, can not
be had in this world, but to be riche in
the fauour of God, but in contemning

thereof, and in estéeming lesse of earthly thinges than they be in déede. Go round about the sea and lande, wander whither thou wilt (as sayth S. Augustine) and thou shalt find wretchednes euery where, if thou walke not in the way of the Lorde, in whom consisteth al felicitie and contentment.

¶ The Argument.

The vvay of God is novve nothing difficult, nor austere at al, but is become very playne and easy, by the instruction and ensample of Christ, but especially by his passion, his resurrection, & assention, and after by his sending dovvne of the holy Ghost.

The. xij. Chapiter.

WHether there be which excuse themselues, saying, The way of god is very harde, and this is onely because his precepts are repugnant to the inclination of mans appetites. This is one of the principal causes that maketh men to loth this labour, but the authors of such allega-

allegations, though they be Chriſtians, and liue vnder the lawe of grace, they knowe not yet the firſt letter that ſtandeth in the Alphabet of this lawe, nor haue any ſmacke of this myſterie. O thou vnhappy wretche which makeſt profeſſion to be a Chriſtian, tel me I beſeeche thee, wherefore came Chriſte into the worlde? wherefore did he ſhed his blond? why did he inſtitute ſo many ſacramentes? why ſent he the holye Ghoſt? what is ment by the Goſpel, by grace, by this worde Jeſu? what doth this renowmed name of Lord and Sauiour ſignifie which thou worſhippeſt? If thou knoweſt not, aſke of the Euangeliſt, who ſayth, His name ſhal be Jeſu, for it ſhal be he that ſhal ſaue his people from their ſinne. But what is it to be a ſauiour and deliuerer from ſinne, if by him we do not merite pardon for our offentes paſſed, and grace to excuſe thoſe that are to come? For what cauſe came Chriſt into the world, if not to helpe vs to ſaluation? Wherfore dyed he vpon the croſſe, if not to

ſlay

slay sinne: why did he rise agayne after his death, if not to reuiue vs? Likewise wherefore spent he his bloud, if not for a medicine able to heale thy festred woundes? wherefore ordeyned he so many Sacramentes, if not for a special remedie agaynst sinne? what is the chefest fruite of his commiug and passion, if not to shewe vs therby the way to heauen, whiche before was austere and difficult? As appeareth by Esaias, Esai.40. where he sayth, At the comming of Messias, the crooked wayes shall become straight, and the bytter passages pleasaunt, large, and wyde. Besydes al this, why did he sende his holy ghost, if not of flesshe to make thee spirituall: and wherefore did he sende it in the forme of fire, if not to the ende thou shouldest be enflamed as fire, illuminated, fortified, and transformed into himselfe, and should drawe thee to heauen whence he descended, that he might powre vpon thee the grace and vertue that floweth from him abundantly, therby to lighten the heauy yoke of sinne, and to mitigat

the

the exercise of vertue, by reioyſing in aduerſitie, by hope in perils, & by ouercomming in temptations. This is the beginning, the middle, and ende of the Goſpel, that as one carnal man & a ſynner (whiche was Adam) made vs all earthly and ſinners: ſo an other man beeing celeſtiall and iuſte (deſcending from heauen) made vs al celeſtial and iuſt. What other thing dyd the Euangeliſtes write of? What other promiſes did the Prophet foreſpeake of? what els dyd the Apoſtles preache of? There is no other diuinitie but this: this is the worde abbreuiated: this god wrote vpon the earth, this is the conſummation and abridgement heard by the Prophet Eſay, which was verified by the ſequel of the great abundance of vertue and iuſtice, which came into the world immediatly after.

Then (deare brother) behaue thy ſelfe as though thou wert newly conuerted to chriſtianitie, and aſke of ſome ſkilful diuine, what thou art charged to dw by this thy Religion: of whom thou

thou shalt receyue no other aunswere than that it behoueth thée to be a good man: whiche to accomplishe this profession geueth thée comfort & courage, and causeth the carnal man to become spirituall, geuing vnto him the holy ghost, the better thereby to procéede in the promises. Surely it is a great ouersight that thou bearing the name of a Christian so many yeres, knowest not yet what difference is betwéene the written lawe and the lawe of grace. In this then consisteth the difference (sith thou knowest it not) that law enioyned a man to be iust, not furnishing him with forces necessarie for that exployt: but this also chargeth vs to be iust and good, geuing grace and hability to accomplishe his commaundement: therefore for this cause and no other it is termed, the law of grace. That pressed vs to battayle, without weapons to fight: willed vs to ascende to heauen, but gaue vs no ladders to climbe: prescribed to men that they should be spirituall, yet did it not inspire them with

the

the holy ghost that they might be spiritual. But nowe it is otherwise, for this lawe ceasing, the other succéded which farre excéded it, by his merites, and by the sacred blood of Christ. And yet as though the olde lawe were not extinguished, nor Christ come into the world thou standest Jewishly conjecturing that of thy selfe thou art sufficient to fulfil and execute this lawe, and so to be iustified. Wherfore euery one that vnderstandeth this, shal perceyue apparantly that many authors agrée, that this way of the Lord is both swéte and sowre. For loue of the wordes issuing out of thy mouth, sayth the Prophet, I trudge a iourney harde and vnsauery. I am delighted with thy commaundementes, as with the greatest treasures. For this way conteyneth in it selfe both partes, that is, it is difficult and easy: difficult in respect of nature, easy in respect of vertue and grace, in suche sorte that which was harde by one reason, is light by another. As our Sauiour sheweth when he sayde, that his yoke was Psal. 18.

easy,

easy, and his burthen pleasaunt: for a yoke and burthen is al one in signification. But to say it was swéete, declareth the facilitie he had in bearing it here, through the grace which was geuen vnto him: So that if thou demaundest, howe it is possible that béeing a yoke it should be easy, séeing it is the propertie of a yoke to be heauy and hateful? Wherevnto it may be answered, that God doth qualifie the grefe of those that willingly submit themselues to the sayde yoke, as he hath promised by the Prophet Esay, saying, I will be as he whiche loseth the yoke, and as he that vnloadeth a mans necke from the waight thereof. What thing is more worthy of admiration, than this, that a yoke is easy, and that by God it is made portable, for that him selfe supporteth the burthen? Wherefore then doth it séeme a thing incredible vnto thée, that this burther shoulde be pleasaunt, séeing God doth helpe to sustayne it? But wilt thou sée both these contrarieties to concur in one person?

Yeare

Heare what Saint Paule sayth, We suffer aduersitie in sundry sortes, yet are we not impacient: we liue in extreme penurie, nor for this are we ouercommed: we abide persecutions, yet are we not destitute: we are humbled, yet not confounded: oppressed euen to the earth, yet not reiected vtterly. Now regarde on the one side the lothsome loade of labours, and on the other side the delight that is therin by the benifite of grace, which yet the Prophet Esay sheweth more manifestly, saying, They which trust in the Lorde shal chaunge their strength, shal runne swiftly without sweating, shall goe still and neuer be weery. See heere the yoke made easy by the vertue of grace. Beholde the fury of the flesshe abated and conuerted to the force of the spirite, or to tearme it more rightly, the might of men turned into strength of God. Heare howe the Prophet did not restrayne him selfe neither from labour, nor from rest, nor from the commoditie he gat of the one and other, where he saide, They ranne, Rom. 5. Esay. 40.

and it grieueth them not, they went forth still and were neuer weery.

Wherfore welbeloued brother, thou oughtest not to diuert from this way though it seeme somewhat harde and sowre, sith God and his grace are thy guides therein. For it is no reason that nature should more preuaile thā grace, nor Adam to be of more power than Christ, nor the diuel to be greater than God, nor yet the custome and long vse of euyl, than the habite of vertue and wel dwings.

¶The Argument.

A man shoulde not prognosticate his conuersion to God, nor his repentaunce and auersion from those offences, vvherby he hath displeased the diuine maiestie of god and his neighbour: for the more he is spotted and infected vvith the filth of vice, and the slovver he is in clensing and curing thereof, so muche the more he doth aggrauate the burthen of his penaunce.

The.xiij. Chapiter.

Wherefore if the causes be so many, and so great, whiche of the one part doth moue thee to chaunge the course of thy life to a better race, and on the other side haue no sufficient excuse to withhold thée from so doing: Tel me, I pray thée, when wilt thou be ready to reuolt from sinne. Turne backe thy eye, brother, a little towards the life that is passed, and consider of what peres thou art now: for nowe is the time, for the howre of entraunce is passed, and the beginning to vnloade thyselfe from thy former faultes. Beholde that thou being a Christian, regenerate with the water of holy baptisme, hauing God for thy father, and the Churche for thy mother, which God formed and framed with the law of his Gospel, and with the doctrine of the Apostles and Euangelists, and (that more importeth) with the fode of Angels, and yet thou lyuest so lowsely as thou were an Infidel altogether, and neuer knewest God. But

tel me, what ſorte of ſinne, what follie can be founde, wherein thou arte not culpable: what forbidden trée is there, wherein thou haſt not fixed thy eyes: what greene medowe, where at leaſt in thought thou haſt not glutted thy laſciuious luſt: what pleaſaunt accident hath beene obiected to thy ſight, whereunto thy deſire hath not bén extended: What appetite of thine haſte thou not aſſayed to accompliſhe: Calling God to thy minde, and howe thou art a chriſtian, what more couldeſt thou do, then to haue a fayth without expectation of the other life, and feare of future iudgement: What hath thy life ben els then a web of wickedneſſe, a ſinke of ſinne, a pathe of pleaſure, a perpetual diſobedience to God: How haſt thou lead thy life hitherto, but as thy appetites hath guyded thee, as beſt fancyed thy fleſhe, in exalting thy ſelfe, and in the glory of the worlde: Theſe haue beene thy goddes, theſe the Idols wherevnto thou haſte kneeled and crowched, whoſe heſtes thou haſte fully perfourmed.

med. But in the meane time what account hast thou kept with the diuine lawe of God, and thy allegeaunce dewe vnto him? Perchaunce thou hast estéemed him no more than if he had bene a God made of wood, for many Christians there be whiche wyll as easyly beleeue that there is no God, as they thinke to offende him scotfrée. For they do no lesse beléeuing the one, then they woulde if they beléeued the other. What greater wrong, what greater despite maye there be, to so greate a Prince, than thou beleeuing al that the Christian religion instructeth thée, lyuest no otherwise than if it were a fable? But art thou not appalled at the multitude of thy former offences done without grudge of conscience? Doth not his omnipotencie cause thee to quake, agaynst whom thou hast committed such enormous crimes? Lift vp thy eyes, and regard the immeasurable greatnes of that supernal Lorde, adored of all the potentates of heauen, before whome the whole circuyte of

the worlde lyeth prostrate, in whose presence al that is created is as light chaffe tossed with euery puffe of winde. And consider what a thing it is that suche a silly worme as thou art, hast so oft prouoked the wrath of that eternal God. Loke vpon the exceeding greatnes of his iustice, and the sharpe punishments which hitherto he hath vsed in ỹ worlde agaynst sinne, not onely in perticuler persons, but in cities, nations, kingdomes, prouinces, and in the vniuersal worlde: and not only in the earth, but in heauen, and there not in sinners only, but in his owne innocent sonne. Then if this were executed vpõ greene wood, and for the faultes of others, what shal be done in withered wood ouercharged with the weight of proper offences. Wherfore what can be more vndecent and intollerable, than that suche a vyle vermin shoulde delude a Lorde so puissaunt, that with a becke or a worde can detrude thee into the deapth of hel and damnation. Loke in like sort vpon the patience of this Lorde, who nowe so

long

long hath loked for thy returne as thou haſt bene an offendour. If after ſo long ſufferance thou wilt ſtill abuſe his mercie in incenſing him to anger, he wyl vnloade his bowe, will empty his quyuer, and powre vpon thée the dartes of damnation. View the profoundneſſe of his déepe iudgementes, whereof we reade and ſée dayly things worthy to be wondred at. We may ſée a Salomon after al his wiſedome, his parables and profounde myſteries of the Canticles, to forget God, and to fal downe in reuerence of Idols. We may ſée one of the firſt ſeuen Deacons of the Church, whiche were enſpired with the holy ghoſt, not only became an heretike, but alſo a teacher, and a father of hereſie. We may ſée day by day many ſtarres to fall from heauen into the earth, with a miſerable fal, to tumble in dust, and to be fedde with the draffe of ſwine, whiche earſt at the table of our Lorde were ſuſtayned with the bread of Angels. Therfore if the righteous for their ſecret pride, or negligence and ingra-

titude, became so vnmindeful of God, after they had bene his duetyfull seruauntes so many yeres: What dooest thou looke for, hauing framed thy lyfe to no other trade then to accumulate one sinne vpon another? Therefore whosoeuer we see to liue in this sort (as we haue tolde of before) shall it not be expedient that he shoulde nowe at the length ceasse to fill vp the measure of his iniquities, and to assaye to please God, and to deliuer his soule from bondage? should it not suffice him that he hath lyued so lewdly tyl this howre, addicting him selfe wholly to the worlde, the flesshe, and the diuel, and hereafter to imploy him selfe, and to runne out the remnant of his race in the homage and honour of God? Is it not needefull after so long time, and so many iniuries committed agaynst his diuine maiestie, to feare his seuere iustice, whiche the more pacientlye it beareth with the wicked, so muche the more rigorously is reuenged vpon them in the ende? shal it not be reason that he shoulde be

afrayde

afrayde to lye so long swallowed vp in the gulfe of sinne, depriued of the grace of God, and to haue so strong an enimie as is he, who of a deare father through his desertes is become his aduersarie and his iudge? Shal it not be reason to dread least the force of long vse be turned into nature and habite, making of vice necessitie? How should he not feare by little and little to fal into a reprobate sence, whervnto when a man is come he doth not any thing that is acceptable in the sight of almightie God? The Patriarke Iacob sayde to his father in lawe Labin, Foureteene yéeres are passed since I haue serued thée, and haue had charge of thy businesse, and now it is time that I attend vpon mine owne affayres, and that I begin to prouide for mine owne house. Wherefore I pray thée, sith thou hast bin so long, not a retayner, but a dayly wayter to the world, not letting slip any opportunitie of this life, which was eyther appendaunt to thy pleasures, or agreeing to thy appetites: shall it

not to be reasonable for thée now at the length, to get some commoditie for thy soule, and for the bettering of thy estate in the other life? certainly there is nothing more short and vnsure than the life of man. Why then thou prouiding so carefully al necessaries for that whiche is so momental and transitory, dost not likewise make some prouision for that which endureth for euer.

¶ The Argument.

A man ought to remember himselfe, and that he is a Christian, and that he beleeue firmely al that he is taught by his fayth, vvhich should moue him eyther through loue or feare. Al things inuite him to the loue and seruice of God, among vvhich he should acquire vvisdome, and harken to the vvords of Christ, vvho fixed himselfe to the crosse for our redemption.

¶ The. xiiij. chapter.

NOw therefore if it be true as I haue saide, I beséeche thée deare brother, and charge thée by the precious blood of christ,

that

that thou remember thy ſelfe that thou art a Chriſtian, and that thou take all that which our fayth teacheth for vnfeyned veritie, which playnly proueth vnto thée, that beſides other things thou haſt a iudge, to whoſe eye lyeth open al the actions and momentes of thy life, who wil come at a day vnwares, wherin he wil exact an account of thee, euen of euery yole worde. This fayth telleth thee farther, that a man at his death is not quite extinguiſhed, becauſe after this mortall life ſucceedeth an other which laſteth eternally: and that mens ſoules dw not periſh with their bodies, but that the bodies reſting and raked vp in their graues, the ſoules yet enter into a newe kingdome, and into an other new world, where ſuche condition and company ſhal be aſſigned vnto thē as their maner and behauiour hath ben in this life. Herevnto this fayth adioyneth yet more, that as the rewarde of vertue, ſo the ſcourge of vice is ſo infinite, that although the whole worlde were ful of bookes, and euery creature

were

were a Scriuener, the wryters would ſoner dye, and the worlde be at an ende, before it coulde be knowen and treated of perticulerly, that which each of theſe doth conteyne in it ſelfe. This ſayth alſo informeth thee, that our debt and dutie is ſo great through our benifites receyued of God, that though the number of a mans yeres dyd ſurpaſſe the ſandes of the ſeas, yet they ſhould be to fewe to acquite him ſelfe in his ſeruice towards him. The ſame faith affirmeth that vertue is of ſuche paſſing valure, that al the treaſures of the worlde, and al that a mans hart can deſire, may in no reſpect be cõpared therevnto. Wherfore if ſuche and ſo great things dw exhort vs to vertue, why be there ſo fewe whiche imbrace it, and endeuour themſelues to attayne it? If men may be moued with any aduauntage or intereſt, what greater gayne is there, what life more perdurable? If with feare, what ſharper punishmẽts, what paine more permanent? If with the bondes of bounteous liberalitie, what greater

debt

debt haue we than that which we owe vnto God, of whom we haue receyued all things? If the dread of dangers may ſtirre vs, what greater perill can there be than that of death, whoſe comming is ſo vncertayne, whoſe accounte ſo ſtraight? If peace, if liberty, if the gifts of the holy ghoſt, and the ſolace of a ſugred life, be deſired of all men, it appeareth euidently that al theſe thinges are founde more readily in that life which is ledde by vertue and reaſon, than in that whiche is ruled by rage and paſſions, for that a man is a reaſonable creature, and not a beaſt. But if al this be not regarded, ſhall it not be ſufficient that for the mayntenaunce of vertue God deſcended from heauen to the earth, and was made man (who hauing created the world in ſix daies) imployed thirtie and three yeeres in this worke, wherein he alſo ſpent his blood and life. God dyed to ſlay ſinne, yet for all this we endeuour to reuiue in our hartes thoſe whom God would deſtroy with his owne death.

What

What should I say more? for all reasons are insufficient to promote this matter, or to shew it as it is. For I say, not respecting the crosse only, but which way soeuer we turne our eyes, we shal finde that al things do cry and cal vs to this commoditie, sith there is no creature in the world (if he be wel noted) but doth inuite vs to the loue and seruice of our supernal Lord: in such sort, that looke howe many creatures there be in the world, so many prechers there are, so many bookes, so many voyces which do stirre vs thereunto. Wherefore, howe is it possible that so many shriking sounds as here thou heares, so many promises & thundring threats, can beare no parte to perswade thee thereunto? What should God, or could he do more than that he hath done, eyther by promising or threatning, to draw vs to him selfe, and to withdraw and terrifie vs from sinne? This notwithstanding beeing of suche weight, what shal I blame the boldnes or bluntishnesse of men, whiche beleeuing this

assured-

aſſuredly, doubt not to daily out the day in ſinne, to ſleepe with ſinne, to aryſe with ſinne, and to bath them ſelues in the beaſtly puddle of al iniquities: and to dꝛ al this without feare, without ſcruple, without abꝛidging their ſleepe, oꝛ abating their fare, as though al their beléefe were a dꝛeame, and the ſayings of the Euangeliſts fables of Titius the Giaunt, and ſuche like? Howe couldeſt thou dꝛ moꝛe than thou doeſt, if thou diddeſt doubt of thy beléefe? ſith it is euident that hitherto onely the ſhame and feare of the woꝛld hath bꝛidled thy appetites: yet the feare of God can not reſtrayne thée from ſatiſfying thy ſenſualitie, noꝛ make thée bluſhe in executing thy diueliſh deuices. Wel me, blind as thou art, depꝛiued of vnderſtanding, béeing in ſuche ſecuritie and confidence wherupon woꝛketh the woꝛme of conſcience? whither is fayth vaniſhed, knowledge, iudgement, reaſon, which onely indued thée with the title to be called a man? Doeſt thou not dꝛead ſo huge, ſo certayne, ſo vndoubted daungers?

gers? If thou were set at the table and serued with meates, and some man should come vnto thée (thogh a knowen lyer) saying, that the meates set before thée were impoysoned, thou wouldest doubte and dreade to eate it, were the meate neuer so delicate, and he a lyer that did aduise thée: Then if the Prophetes, if the Apostles, if the Euangelistes, if God him selfe doth crye vnto thée, saying, Death is in ỹ pot, O wretched man, death dwelleth in gluttonie, which the diuel presenteth before thée, and darest thou to receyue thy death with thy owne hands, and to drink the dram of thy damnation? What now auaileth this beleefe buried in thy bosom? where is his light, his firmnes as steele, his pearsing sharpnes, seeing none of al these thinges can extenuate thy sinne?

O madde myser, O franticke fole, made senceleſſe by the suttle sleightes of the Serpent, adiudged to eternall darkneſſe bothe within and without, for that thou goest straight from inwarde to outwarde darkneſſe. Blinde

thou

thou art, because thou sæst not thy myserie: senceleſſe, because thou doest not perceyue thy perdition: and more obdurate than the Diamonde, because thou feeleſt not the weightie bytle of the worde of the Lorde. O wretche wrapt in woe tenne thousande folde, worthy to be bewayled with no other teares than those whiche shall lament thy damnation, saying, If thou knewest the contentment, the quiet, the peace, and riches that God in this life hath offered vnto thée, whiche nowe are thus shut and kept from thée. O wretched was the dismal day of thy natiuitie, but muche more miserable shal be the day of thy death, whiche shal be the very dore and first steppe to thy damnation. Howe muche better had it beene, if thou haddest neuer beene borne, than to bee tormented for euer? Howe muche better had it beene for thee neuer to haue beene baptised, nor to haue knowen the fayth, sithe there they serue thée to none other ende but to make thy fault more grieuous? for

if

if the reache of reason be sufficient to cause the guylt of the Philosophers to be inexcusable, for that they knowing God in a sort, did not glorifie him (as the Apostle sayth.) Howe muche lesse can he excuse him self whosoeuer he be, hauing receyued the light of fayth, and the water of baptisme, and yerely receyueth the holy Cõmunion, and euery day heareth his doctrine, dothe nothing that belongeth therevnto, as the Philosophers them selues haue shewed to haue done in their liues? But what shal we inferre of al that we haue sayd before, if not to conclude briefly, that there is no other sence, no other wisedome, no other counsel in the worlde, but to reiect al the lettes and intricate cares of this life, and to pursue that only path, where is obteyned sure peace and eternal blisse? To this reason doth inuite vs iustice, lawe, heauen, earth, hel, life, death, and the mercy of God. To this the holy ghost doth enioyne vs by the mouth of Ecclesiastick, saying, My sonne, employ the flourishing yeres

of

of thy youth to diſcipline, that in thy age thou mayſt ſucke the ſwæte ſappe of ſapience, as he whiche tilleth and ſoweth, expecteth with patience the commodity that groweth therof. Thy græfe and ſmarte ſhall be very ſlender, and ſone ſhalte haue a plentyfull harueſt. My ſonne harken to my wordes, and deſpiſe not the aduiſe I geue thæ: put voluntarily thy feete into the fetters that prudence hath prepared, and thy necke into her yoke: bowe downe thy ſhoulders, and take her bondes vppon thæ, and let it not græue thæ to be tyed therewith: Couple thy ſelfe to her with al thy hart, with al thy forces, and with al thy might: Follow her footeſteppes, ſearche her diligently, and thou ſhalte finde her, and when thou haſte founde her, læſe her not agayne in any condition. For ſhe ſhal geue comforte to thy crooked age, and that whiche earſt ſæmed ſowre and tedious vnto thæ, ſhal become ſwæte and delectable, and her fetters ſhal be the foundation of vertue, and her chaynes the iewels of

glory. For in that happy life her bonds are the bulwarkes of health. Thus muche ſayth Eccleſiaſticke, by whiche wordes he notifieth vnto vs the great beautie, the delightes, the libertie and ryches of true wiſedome, whiche is vertue it ſelfe, and the knowledge of God, of whiche we heare treate. But if this be not ſufficiente to mollifie thy ſtony harte, lyfte vp thy eyes and loke not to the water of the worlde, whiche fleeteth quickly, but beholde that lorde, who dying vppon the croſſe, and ſharply ſatiſfying for that whiche thy ſinnes deſerued. Where he ſtandeth in that forme as thou ſeeſt, with his feete faſtened, to ſtaye for thee, and with his armes ſtretcht abroade to receyue thee, and with his head declining to geue thee at thy comming (as to the prodigal ſonne) the ſweete kiſſe of reconciliation. There he calleth to thee (if thou haſt ỹ grace to heare him) with ſo many cryes as he hath woundes in al his body. Imagine with thy ſelfe that thou heareſt his wordes in thy

harte,

hart, ſounding in this ſort: Turne vnto me, turne vnto me, O Samaritane, turne vnto me, for I will receiue thée. Thou knowest wel that thou hast committed adultery, with all those louers thou lustest after, yet for al this turne vnto me, and I wyll pardon thée: turne vnto me, I say, for I am thy father, thy God, thy creator, thy sauiour, thy faythfull friende, thy onely benefactor, thy full and perfect felicitie, thy finall ende. In me thou shalt finde rest, ioye, peace, health, trueth, wisedome, and all treasures. In me thou shalte finde the flowing vayne of the liuely water, whiche chaseth thirste away, and lyfteth vp a man to lyfe eternall. In me thou shalt stande lyke vnto the trée planted by the ryuers syde, whiche yéeldeth his fruite in due and conuenient tyme, whiche neuer léeseth his verdure, and all that he doeth shall succéede prosperously.

My brother, these are the voyces, the drums, & trũpets, wherwith gods eter-

nall wisedome, calleth sinners vnto him, if thou wilt harken to this harmonie, and not lysten to the Syren songs of the subtil serpent, turne thy selfe vnto God, and amende thy lyfe spædyly, to the whiche ende this Treatise is addressed. But howe this is to be perfourmed, shal be shewed in the nexte volume.

The ende of the Conuersion of a Sinner.

templations, gathered by the
sayde Author.

¶ The Argument.

A Christian man vvhiche coueteth to come vnto God, must make his entrance through the gate of compunction, generally confessing al his offences. VVherevnto it shal auyle him muche, to exercise him selfe euery day in certayne prayers and godly meditations, and in the considerations of death and of Gods seuere iudgement.

¶ The first Chapter.

HE therefore that is departed out of Egypt, and beginneth to marche towardes the lande of promise: he that lyke vnto the losse sonne remembreth him selfe, and openeth his eyes to beholde the beames of glittering vertue, and knoweth the perplexity wherin he is plunged, and the fraude of this frayle life, and desireth to returne to the plente-

ous repaſſes of his fathers houſe, his firſt paſſage muſt be through ỹ ſtraights of penaunce, where it behoueth him ruthfully to recorde in his minde his former ryots and exceſſes, and firmely to purpoſe the amendement of them. And for that this diſcuſſion and examination ought to be as the Prophet ſayeth, with affliction and remorce of conſcience, it is the parte of the penitent at that time to vſe all ſuche prayers and conſiderations as by any meanes maye ſtirre him to teares and dolour. To the which auayleth much the conſideration of death, of Gods finall iudgement, of the paynes of hel, and of the paſſion of Chriſt, ſuffred for the ſatiſfaction of our ſinnes: With it is apparant that if there had beene no defectes on our ſide, there had beene no cauſe of his grieuous annoy. Theſe and ſuche like conſiderations may moue vs to ſorowe, and to the deteſtation of ſinne, whiche is the cheefeſt parte of repentaunce. In the which we ſhould exerciſe our ſelues not onely the ſpace of

fiue or sixe dayes, but the greatest part of our life. Wherein many penitents are deceyued, who beeing most diligent in scouring their conscience, and scanning their faultes, are quite careles in bewayling of them, whereas both the one and the other are most necessarie, but cheefly the last. And I thinke verely, that the cause why so many faynte in the folowing of vertue, and in long time can not attayne to perfection, and sometyme to surcease their iourney begonne, is, because they haue not layde a sure foundation, nor haue not planted the rootes deepe ynough in this exercise. For this beeing the pyller of all the buylding, when the foundation it selfe is feeble, the worke can not be firme whiche is erected vpon it. To the whiche ende it is very necessary to assigne certayne dayes, many or fewe, as the holy ghost shal direct vs, wherein (as I haue sayde before) we may exercise our selues in all suche prayers and meditations as maye induce vs to this sorrowe. For the

playner declaration of this doctrine, I minde to impart vnto you a fewe of the foresayde considerations, whiche may serue, not onely to stirre vs to be sory for our sinnes, and to the hatred therof, but also to allure vs to the loue of vertue, and to the feare of God, and to the contempt of the world, for all this is nedeful to nouices and beginners.

¶The Argument.

He that liste to encline his harte to the hatred of sinne, and to the dread of God, must conuey him selfe into some couert corner, and must bende and imploy his minde to the contemplation of the heauenly blisse, and the iniquities vvhich abounde here in earth.

The.ij. Chapiter.

Whosoeuer then will haue his hart setled herevpon, and wil fasten this firmly inhis mind, must euery day once or twise take a time most quiet and conuenient for that purpose, and sequestring him selfe into a secrete place, al other earthly

ly thoughtes and vayne imaginations beeing layde aparte, arming him selfe first with the shielde of fayth, and humbly crauing the grace of the holy spirite to assiste him in this behalfe: assuming to him selfe the minde of that deuoute publican, which durst not to lift vp his eyes towardes heauen, for the confusion and horrour of his offences. Let him repeate some general confession, or els the Psalme Miserere mei deus, with so great deuotion as he can deuise, and sodenly let him apply his minde to the considerations folowing, that by this meanes he maye attayne the feare of God, through the sorowe, the dread, and detestation of sinne.

¶ The Argument.

In the first cõsideration a christian ought to runne ouer the multitude of the mortal offences that he hath committed.

The.iij. Chapter.

THe first sting that may stirre vs to the woo and hatred of our iniquities, is, to cõsider the infinite num-

number of them, and to fixe them before our eyes, as a terrible troupe of armed Souldiers, that the soule may be appalled with so hideous a spectacle. Runne ouer therefore briefly all the commaundementes of God, through al the capital sinnes, through all the senses, the powers and partes aswel of thy body, as of thy soule, and thou shalt perceyue that there is scarse any commandement which thou hast not transgressed, nor any sinne wherein thou haste not sonke, nor any sense external or internal, whiche thou haste not abused, nor any benefite whiche thou haste imployed to that ende for which it was geuen thée: But as the Prophete sayth, God hath geuen thée his golde and siluer, and therewith thou haste serued Baal. Looke therefore into thy selfe throughly, and viewe the race of thy lyfe passed, and thou shalt sée a huge webbe fraught full of deceipt, of trecherie, of pride, of lyes, of slouth, of enuie, of couetousnesse, of hatred, of entisementes, of blasphemie, of malice,

lice, and of a thousande other maners of mischiefes: and thou shalt finde that like a brutishe beast, in all and euery of these thou hast folowed and fulfilled thy sensuall delightes, without regarde of the lawe of iustice or reason, and thou shalt perceyue that thou hast liued as a Gentil or pagan altogether, which neuer knew God, or as though thou so beléeuest that there were no God, no death, no iudgment, no payne, no blisse, nor any thing els to be thought, but euen to be borne, and to dye. He then that hath liued this many yeres so disorderly, shall it not be reason that he imploy the fewe dayes that are remayning of his life, in bewayling his former yéeres fondly consumed, and to féele sensibly the ruine and decay of the powers of his soule, and the time that he might haue gayned in this whyle, which he shal not get hereafter? For time loste can neuer bee recouered. Throw therefore thy selfe downe prostrate before the fete of thy sauiour, and with a pēsiue hart say as foloweth, My

sinnes

ſinnes, O Lorde, are in number aboue the ſandes of the Sea. I haue ſpotted my ſelfe with the filth of euery vice, and my offences are ſo multiplyed, that I deſerue not, nor dare not to beholde the heauens, becauſe I haue prouoked thy wrath, and haue done euil in thy ſight.

¶ The Argument.

In the ſeconde conſideration he ſhould conſider, that by ſinne is loſte the grace and comfort of the holy ghoſt, the mutual amitie, the fauour and fatherly protection of god, the participation of al the good things done in the vniuerſal Churche, and the benifites of Chriſtes paſsion.

The. iiij. Chapter.

WEigh farther, of howe great treaſures vice doth rob and ſpoyle thee, which is one of the conſiderations that ſhould moſte affright a Chriſtian, what ſoeuer he be, examining throughly on the one ſyde what is loſte by ſinne, and on the other, with what facilitie careleſſe men offende dayly. For by ſinne is

loſt

losse the grace of the holy ghost, which is the most precious gifte that God can bestowe vpon his best beloued in this life. It robbeth vs also of the fauour of God which alwayes accompanieth his grace. And if it be a great grefe to lese the fauour of an earthly Prince, howe muche greater should the grefe be, to incurre the displeasure of him that is king of heauen and earth. It bereueth vs of the vertuous flowing from aboue, of the giftes of the holy Ghost, wherewith the soule is made bright and pure in the sight of God, and is armed and animated agaynst the force & violence of the enimie. It robbeth the soule of his interest in heauen, which procedeth from the same grace, sith that by grace glory is geuẽ (as the Apostle saith) Also of the spirit of adoption, which maketh vs the sonnes of God, & in stede thereof infecteth vs with the fury of rebellion, which causeth vs to impugne his holy pleasure, whereby we lese the entertaynement due vnto sonnes, and the fatherly prouidence which God taketh

keth of those whom he receyueth for his children, which is one of the greatest treasures that in this life maye be enioyed. Wherein the Prophet reioyced not without good cause, when he sayde, I am right glad (O Lorde) because I sée my selfe shrowded vnder the shadowe of thy windes, whiche is, vnder the protection and fatherly prouidence that he hath of his chosen people. By sinne is lost the peace, the quiet, and comfort of a guyltlesse conscience, the swéetenesse and solace of the holy ghost, the fruite and merite of the vertuous actions that thou hast wrought al thy life before, euen vntil that houre, the participation of al those treasures which the Church holdeth in her custodie. Finally, by sinne is losse the participation and fruition of the merites whiche flowe from Christes passion, who is our head, because a sinner is not incorporated in his body as a liuely member through grace and charitie. Al this is lost by one mortal offence, and that which is gayned thereby, is, to be

adiud-

adiudged to eternall tormentes, and for that time to be cancelled out of the booke of lyfe, and in ſtéede of the ſonne of God, to be made the vaſſall and bondeſlaue of Satan: and in ſtéede of the temple and ſeate of the moſt bleſſed Trinitie, to become the denne of theeues, the neaſt of ſerpentes, the receipt and harbour of venomous Baſiliſkes. This is the guerdon conuenient for ſinne, whereby thou mayeſt learne whether it be not good reaſon to tremble and quake, beholding with howe little ſcruple of conſcience, with what facilitie and confidence, ſo many careleſſe men offende without meaſure. And farther, what reaſon it were that thou bedeweſt thy chéekes with bloudy teares, if not for the loue of God, yet at leaſt for thine owne diſtreſſe, whiche haſt loſte ſuche ineſtimable ryches, for ſo ſmal a myte as is the delight and taſte of one treſpaſſe. If Eſau wayled and wept ſo bitterly, becauſe he had loſt his inheritance in lew of the like taſte: with what cryes and com-

complaynts shouldest thou fill heauen and earth, for the losse of so worthy a patrimonie? that with greefe and sorrowes sharpe, thou mayst recouer the thing thou hast losse by daliaunce and delightes.

¶The Argument.

In the thirde consideration he shoulde thinke vpon gods benefites bestowed vppon man, that he might be abashed thereat, and be ashamed of himselfe. And therefore enioyne himselfe to some sharp affliction, for that he hath bene a creature so vngrateful and vnkinde.

The. v. Chapter.

FOr the better replication of this, ponder in thy minde the infinite number of Gods benefites. For howe muche the more a man wayeth howe bountyfull God hath bene towards him: so muche the more he shal be confounded in himself seeing how wicked he hath shewed him selfe to God. In this sort the Prophets did often perswade the people of

God

God to repentaunce. And in this manner Nathan the Prophet began with Dauid, when ere he reproued him of adultery, layde before him the fauour and regall dignitie, wherevnto God had promoted him, and what els he had reserued for him. In like sorte a man should chefly regarde these ten kinde of benefites that ensue: that is, the benefite of creation, of conseruation, of redemption, of baptisme, of calling, of diuine inspiration, of preseruatiō from euyl, of the Sacramentes, of peculier grace and pryuate prerogatiues which he hath receyued of his Sauiour, and lastly of the glory whiche he expecteth hereafter to haue. And perticulerly let him fire him selfe vpon the benefite of vocation, whiche is this, that God hath looked so long for his conuersion, and hath suffered and supported his sundry sortes of sinne with suche excedyng patience, breathing vpon him eftsones godly motions and diuine inspirations in the very midst of his naughty life, thereby to withdrawe him from

his iniquities, and to stirre him to repentance.

Weyghing then with equal balance this wonderful liberalitie and benignitie of our Sauiour on the one side, and on the other our stubbornes, ingratitude, rebellion, and abhominations committed agaynst so mercyful and bounteous a benefactor, who will not be abashed and appalled thereat? who wyl not rent his clothes? whose eyes will not yelde streames of teares? whose harte and intrails wil not be consumed in sighes? who wil not call al creatures to reuenge and to wreeke their wrath vppon a caytife so ingrateful and rebellious.

¶The Argument.

In the fourth consideration a Christian shoulde consider the contempt and iniurie he hath done to God by his offences: esteeming more and preferring earthly drosse before his diuine Maiestie.

The. v. Chapter.

Consider farther the despight, and great wrong that is done vnto God through synne, for that so ofte as we offende, the iudgement and practise thereof dothe still passe into our hartes, weakeneth the vnderstanding, and dimmeth the light of reason, whereby we banishe all feare of transgression, nor we feele not the weighte of synne, whiche if it were set diametrically in the one part before the interest of sinne, which is some delight, or gayne, or steppe of dignitie, or suche lyke, and on the other parte the displeasure of God, whereby we leese vtterlye God him selfe, who is the toppe of our felicitie. In suche sorte as though God were conteined in one ballance, and the taste aforesayde in the other, and a man placed in the middest, deliberating and geuing sentence which should be reiected, despiseth God to enioye that fleeting delight: what greater contempt, what more ignominie, what so great reproch

can there be offered to the diuine Maiestie of God, than to preferre & estæme better of drosse and fylth, than of Gods excellencie. Wherin we muche resemble the Hebrewes, when Christe and Barabas beeing presented before them, to knowe whiche should be deliuered, with one accorde they rather chose Barabbas than Christe. And this is as though we would saye vnto God, we will no more account thee for God, but we wil adore and haue for our God and final ende, our owne delightes and proper gayne. For he that so muche regardeth a delight, that he preferreth it before the loue of God, and estæmeth and accounteth it of greater price than God him selfe, allayeth to robbe God of his royal dignitie, who is the prop and piller of our beatitude, bestowing it vpon some brikle or beastly pleasure, whiche is as though he would bereaue God of his crowne, and geue it to a creature. What thing can be more horrible than this: God commaunded the heauens beeing senceleſſe creatures,

that

that they should feele this defecte, and should wonder thereat, saying by the Prophete Jeremie, O ye heauens be astonied thereat, and let your gates cracke with marueyling, for my people haue offended me greeuously after two sortes: They haue forsaken me the fountayne of the water of lyfe, and they assay to assuage their thirst in stinking puddles which can holde no water. He then that considereth how many thousande times he hath done vnto God the very same contempt and iniurie, what should he not tremble to haue committed so greeuous crimes? should he not wishe that his eyes were turned into fountaynes of teares, to bewayle nighte and day so great euyls and excesses?

¶ The Argument.

Fifthly, vve ought to consider hovve muche God hateth sinne, and for the same hovve many men be scourged with sundry greeuous calamities.

The. vij. Chapter.

Consider the execrable hatred that God beareth to sinne, whiche can not be comprehended in the vnderstanding of man, for that the malice of sinne is conformable to the maiestie of the person offended. Wherfore as the greatnesse and omnipotencie of God is infinite, so also is the malice of synne committed agaynst him. And farther, as the bountie of God is infinite, so he hath an infinite hatred to wickednesse. And yet if thou wilte knowe this geare more clearely, and wilte imprint deeper in thy minde the hugenes of this hatred, and therewithal wilt fire in thy harte the feare of God (whiche is the foundation of all our auayle) marke the dreadfull and bytter punishmentes that he hath executed agaynst synne, and thereby shalte vnderstande it the better. These punishementes are innumerable, but thou mayest sette to the viewe of thy consideration the moste notable amongst them. As was the wrath of

God

God extended vppon his chéefest Angel, and al his adherentes: Vpon the first man, with al his posteritie: Vpon the whole worlde, by the generall floud: Vpon the fiue great cities consumed with fyre and brimstone, discending from heauen: Vpon the two sonnes of Aron, Nadab and Abiu, because they would offer vp sacrifice to God with other mens fyre: Vpon Dauid, for hys adultery: Vpon Saule for his disobedience: Vpon Hely, for not chastening his children: Vpon Anania and Saphira, for their auarice: Vpon Nabuchodonezer, for his pride: Vpon Hierusalem, Babylon, and Ninine, and other Cities, whiche for their diuers offences were vtterly destroyed and lefte desolate. Consider also the fiercenesse of hell fyre, and the tormentes thereof, whiche GOD prouyded for the reuenge of sinne: the satisfaction and punishmente that hys sonne was forced to endure, before he coulde cure the guylte and griefe of synne, which is more terrible than all

the reſt, for the worthynesse of the perſon, vpon whom it was executed. Euery one of theſe punishmentes, if it be ſcanned aduiſedly with his due circumſtances, ſhall muche auayle to aduiſe vs of the dreadful ſeueritie of Gods iuſtice, and the mortal hatred he beareth to ſinne, whereby may be driuen into our hartes the dread of God, and dolour of ſinne.

He therfore that conſidereth howe oft he hath incurred this ſo haynous indignation of God, ſhal it not be requiſite that he ſhrinke vnd ſheuer thereat, and that he wiſhe for a ſea of ſorowfull ſobbes and teares, to quenche therwith the furie and flame of Gods hideous hatred enkindled agaynſt him. A man therfore meditating in his minde with a vehement paſſion of dole, that the mightie Lorde of hoſtes wyl lay vpon him all the plagues before mentioned, or at the leaſt ſome parte of them: let him mækely proſtrate him ſelfe before the preſence of God, and bæing truely humbled in the very botome of his harte,

harte, say he thus.

¶ A Prayer.

O Supreme Creator of all things, I reckoning in the secrete recordes of my minde, my grieuous guylt committed agaynst thy diuine maiestie, do meruayle at my folly, yea at my madnes, wayghing howe benigne & mightie a patron I haue abandoned. I accuse and curse my ingratitude, seeing that from such libertie, am come to so wretched thraldome: I know not what to expect or hope for, but hel, death, and desperation. For the iustice whiche I can not shunne, doth gall and crushe my conscience: yet remembring contrariwise thy infinite mercy and clemencie, which by the testimonie of thy Prophet, excelleth al other workes, and by the which in a certayne maner thou mastereſt thy selfe, sodenly a ioyfull sparke of hope doth recreate my sore afflicted soule. For why should I dispayre to obtayne pardon of him, who by his prophetes doth so ofte inuite sinners

ners to repentance, saying, I wishe not the death of a synner, but rather his conuersion and lyfe. And thy onely begotten sonne by many Parables hath manyfested vnto vs, howe ready thy remission is to all true penitentes. This he shewed by the Jewell whiche was losse and founde agayne: by the prodigall sonne, whose perfect image I acknowledge to be in my selfe. For he I am which haue wrongfully renounced thee my moste affectioned father, and he that wasted his wealth riotoustly: and folowing the pursuites of my fleshly desires, haue fled from the pleasant path of thy commandements, and haue fallen into the beastly bondage of synne, and consequently haue bene oppressed with extreame distresse and myserie. From whence I knowe not who can restore me home agayne, but he onely from whom I haue reuolted. Sweete Sauiour, let thy mercy receiue the man that humbly prayeth pardon, whom thou hast graciously expected euen tyll this howre. But be-

cause

cause this is not due to my merites, in stæde of them I offer vnto thée all the trauayles and desertes of thy dearely beloued sonne, and all the sorowe and tormentes that he hath suffered for me. Therefore mosse mercyful father, for the feruent loue and petitions of thy deare sonne, forgeue the faultes of thy disloyall vassall, regarde the noble sacrifice offered by thy sonne, and race out of thy remembraunce the disobedience of thy lewde seruaunt. For the raunsome that he hath payde for my deliuery, surpasseth farre any my debts or tresspasses whatsoeuer. Oh that it would please thée to put into a payre of balance my lewdnes & thy liberalitie, my wickednes and thy woundes, no doubt the peise of them would be more weightie a great deale. For what guilt can be so grœuous, for whiche suche sorowe can not satisfie sufficiently? whiche can not be washed away with suche affliction, with so many teares, and with suche obedience and humilitie, with suche inuincible patience,

and

and aboue al, with suche immesurable loue? What crime can be so enormous, which may not be cleansed with that bloudy sweat, yea whole flouds of blod? What sinne is there so execrable, whiche is not cured by Christes death? Oh heauenly Father, I offer here vnto thée the selfe same my Sauiour and Redeemer, Jesus Christe thy sonne beloued moste tenderly. His sharpe sorowes, his agonies incomprehensible, the which thou knowest exactly to be suffered for my defects, and in steade of the contrition which I ought to haue for them, I offer vnto thée his bloudy swet, in steade of my teares which I can not shedde because of the adamantical hardnesse of my hart, I offer vnto thée his humble and feruent prayers, for all my slouthes and negligences. For ende, I I offer vnto thée all his lothsome labours, and vertuous exercises, his austere life, and al that he hath wrought therein, and the bytter tormentes that he did abyde, together with all the prayses of the supernal spirits, and merites

of

of al martyrs and saintes, as a worthy sacrifice of thy diuine glory, for all the iniquities wherewith my whole lyfe I haue offended thée, and for the good things which I haue omitted and lefte vndone. Which liuest and raignest for euer and euer. Amen.

¶The Argument.

In the sixt consideration, a man should thinke vpon death, the last iudgement, and hel paynes. And how greeuous will be the separation of the soule from the body, by meanes of death, which by reason of diuers accidentes occurring then together, is the very receipt of excessiue sorowes and anxieties.

The. viij. Chapter.

TO these considerations I wil adde other three, out of Sarasinus of Fermus, that is, death iudgement, and the paynes of hel, which are a very necessarie appendix to all that we haue treated of before. The same doctor telleth vs, that to him that is newly cõuerted, nothing

is

is moze behouefal and requiſite, than the meditation of death, both foz that it repelleth vayne delightes, as alſo becauſe the pzactiſe thereof is of ſuche facilitie, as the whiche we dayly viewe with our eyes, and fæle with our handes: yea, we may rather ſay that our ſureſt poztion is with death, and that we dye continually, hauing a body ſo coꝛruptible, that euery houre altereth and chaungeth his ſhape, and neuer reſteth in one eſtate. Like vnto a ryuer that palleth with a furious & headlong courſe, whereof no parte can be marked thzoghly: foz it running ſwiftly whyleſt ye note one waue, ſtraight it is not the ſame that ye loked vpon befoze, but is turned into another. Many deuout conſiderations may be had concerning death, which the matter it ſelfe yældeth ſufficiently to him that aduiſedly deliberateth herevpon. Of which minding to collect a fewe, I dw affirme, that if thou intende to reformme thy life, whē thou riſeſt in the mozning perſwade thy ſelfe ſo muche as thou

mayeſt,

mayest, that the same will be the laste day of thy life, and dispose of thy soule and worldly affayres, in suche sorte, as though in very dede thou shouldest not liue one howre longer, and thinke not that thou deceyuest thy selfe in so doing, for if death may attache thee euery day, thou shouldest likewise dayly attende his comming. And further I say vnto thee, that no one day of thy life shal passe without many negligences, vnlesse thou doest enforce thy selfe to beléeue that euery of them is the laste of thy life. Thinke also vpon the dreadful stroke of death, which because it is so vncertayne, ought to be feared continually: And consider to howe many perilles of death we are subiected, and thou shalt finde that they are innumerable, aswell within the body as without, in so muche that if thou loke warely about thée, thou shalt perceyue death to be paynted in euery place, and businesse. Thinke also what pressures and agonies shall assault thée at the poynte of death.

To

To this consideration it shal assist thée muche, to beholde sometimes a man dying. Marke the accidentes and paynefull passions of that houre, howe his body lyeth forsaken of natural heate, his sences without force or mouing, as though it were a very stone, the extremities and vttermost partes ware cold, the face is turned into the colour of leade, the bowles of the eyes dipped in, the mouth full of fome, the toung swollen, the nerke winding to euery side. Then marke also howe the brest beateth and panteth, and is ready to burst a sunder with payne, the lippes ware blewe, the téeth become dumme. Finally, al the body dissoluing it selfe, and being forsaken of the soule, with sorowe ineffable the man resteth a lumpe of earth. Thou perceyuing and viewing wel suche perplexities in others, mayst likewise represent the same spectacle in thy selfe, imagining that the Phisitions haue nowe geuen thée ouer, as knowing the maladie to be incurable, thy frændes and kinsfolkes about thy

bedd, whose presence shal augment the griefe of thy departure. O howe dreadful shal that separation be, wher welth shal not allwage thy woe, but shall rather plunge thée deeper in the gulfe of calamities, neyther shal honours assist thée: yea thou shalt leaue them with like, vehement smart, as thou gottest them with greedy desire, and for thy wonted delightes shalt reape the fruits of a gnawing conscience. What then wilt thou do béeing brought to this poynt: what counsayle wilt thou then take? To go out of thy body will be intollerable, to abyde there impossible, to deferre thy departure can not be granted thée, neyther mayst thou returne to thy sensual delightes, which nowe are sensles together, but knowing thy selfe and skanning them more narrowly, shalt be abashed at thine owne brutish behauiour, and if it were possible wouldest flye from thy selfe. Shalt see thy self beset with horrible monsters, that is, with thine owne sinnes, of whom whither soeuer thou wandrest, thou shalt

be purſued and hedged in, al that is paſ-
ſed ſhal ſeeme vnto thée as the twink-
ling of an eye, and ſhalt know the time
to come to be infinite. Then mayeſt
thou wel ſay with the Prophet, The
dolours and dangers of death hath in-
cloſed me rounde about, and the fu-
ry of hell hath aſſaulted me. By this
minding and meditation of death thou
ſhalt acquire many great commodities.
Firſt, thou ſhalt be ſtirred and incenſed
to the ſeruice of God, the feare of whom
is the foundation of wiſedome, and be-
ginning of true bliſſe. Endeuour there-
fore ſo to arme and addreſſe thy ſelfe at
all poynts that thou be not vanquiſhed
by ſinne. Farther, ſhalt viewe thine
owne wretchednesſe and infirmities,
whiche wyll ſerue as a corzie to qua-
liſie the ſwelling rancor of pride, and
to eſtabliſhe humilitie, the very quéene
and guyde of all other vertues. And
ſhalt eaſily reiect hatefull auarice and
grædy gaping for earthly vanities.
For the memory of death cauſeth thée
to knowe that none of theſe thinges

can

can be called thine which thou canſt not cary with thæ out of this woꝛlde. And thou continuing in this exerciſe, vnwares thy dꝛead ſhal be turned into deſire, and death ſhal not ſæme ſo terrible vnto thæ, foꝛ that it depꝛiueth thæ of thy tempoꝛal life, as delightfull and acceptable, becauſe it giueth ende to ſo many græfes and miſeries, and geueth enteraunce to life and light eternal. And thou ſhalt perceyue howe little cauſe thou haddeſt to complayne, oꝛ to be ſoꝛy, weighing that whyleſt thy body doth periſhe and conſume in the graue, thy ſoule lyueth bliſſefully in heauen, with a firme beléefe to riſe again at the laſt day to life euerlaſting.

¶ The Argument.

In the ſeuenth conſideration ought to be premeditated howe ſeuere and rigorous Chriſt vvill be at the day of iudgement: for that his countenaunce vvyll then declare to the vvicked beholders nothing els but furious vvrath and reuenge, vvhich none can eſcape, for there muſte be geuen vp an exact account of

al thinges done and thought of in this vvorlde.

The.ix.Chapiter.

EVery man proueth and perceyueth in him selfe by often experience, that his vnderstanding, by the apprehension of some feareful obiect or weightie consideration, retireth and coucheth closely within it selfe, and for that instant repelleth easily al other ydle imaginations. For which cause it is moste profitable counsayle, that a synner at his first conuersion exercise himselfe seriously in suche cogitations, for that by this meanes pæuishe fansies, sometime through dread, sometime through wonder, wil be eyther bryded or banished quite. If the memory of death, as is aforesayde, hath such force to cut off, and to restrayne our vayne and vagrant thoughtes: howe muche more may this be done by the remembraunce of that which insueth after death immediatly, whiche is Gods iudgement, and the paynes of hel? By which meditations

if thou often thinke vpon them, shall be brought to passe that whiche Ecclesiastick affirmeth, Remember thy dayes, (whereby he meaneth that which then shal happen vnto thee) and thou shalt neuer do amisse. S. Hierome not without iust cause sayd, Whether I eate or drinke, me thinkes still I heare the sound of the trumpet buzzing in my eares, Arise from death, and come to your iudgement. Which howe terrible it shal be can not be imagined, sith all other terrours or tragidies whatsoeuer in comparison of this is nothing at all. Many times God hath manyfested his iudgementes in this worlde, as when he drowned the world with the great floud: when he burned Sodome and the cities adioyning: when he stroke Egypt with dyuers dreadfull plagues: when he made the earth to open in the desert to swallow vp sinners: al which iudgementes, beeing compared to that general iudgement which shal be exercised in the last day, are but shadowes, but shewes, and figures of the veritie.

If then thou desire to come to thy selfe, and to gather thy witts together with the remembraunce of this, represent to thy imagination the terriblenes of Christe thy iudge, whose countenance shal declare nothing els but rigour and reuenge, as at the first comming he shewed mildnesse altogether. From whom thou canst not appeale to any other, because he is supreme Iudge: neither canst thou auoyde his furie, because he is most puissant: and for that he is the very fountayne and God of knowledge, nothing can be concealed from him. And because he hateth iniquitie out of measure, he wyll not suffer any sinne to bee vnreuenged. There thou muste be accountable of al thy transgressions, debtes, and trespasses, whereof if the least be inough to put thée in extreme danger and perpleritie, who can make satisfaction for so many debtes and arrerages, as shall be exacted at thy handes? Then thou shalt be examined howe thou hast bestowed thy time, howe thou haste

ordered thy body, howe thou haste gouerned thy sences, and howe thou hast guyded thy harte, howe thou hast answered to the diuine inspirations, how thou haste acknowledged so many curtesies. In the whiche accusation thou shalt be conuinced with so many witnesses, as are the creatures which thou hast abused by sinne, which then wil be so stirred to reuenge the wrong done vnto their creator, that if it were possible those which are immortal would dye with feare. For it shal be a horrour inestimable, to see the worlde al on fire, the buyldinges and princely pallaces ouerthrowen and torne in peeces, the earth to tremble: to viewe the elementes to chaunge their course, the Sunne to be darkened, the Mone and Starres to leese their light: to beholde the death and destruction of all creatures: the open gaping of graues: to heare the voyce of the terrible trumpe, and woful waylinges of nations: to marke the discouering of consciences: to regarde the mon-

ſtrous deformed deuils, and the infernall furnace ſparkling with furious flakes. But of all other thinges ſhal be moſt terrible to looke vpon the victorious flagge of the croſſe, clittering in the ayre, with all the enſignes of the glorious paſſion of our Sauiour: To ſée the Iudge to charge his enimies for the making fruſtrate, yea the reitteration of ſo many tormentes as he hath ſuffered for their redemption. Who might more eaſily endure the ſmarte of hell paynes, than to ſée them ſelues ſo accuſed and accurſed of the Lord of bountie and curteſie, and to be expelled from his preſence to perpetual punishment.

¶ The Argument.

In the eyght conſideration vve ought to premeditate vpon the intollerable terrour of hel paynes, vvhich shall be perpetuall. But of al thoſe tormentes the moſt greeuous is the loſſe and lacke of Gods chearefull countenance vvithout any hope for euer to gayne it agayne.

The.x. Chapter.

BUt it may so chaunce, that mauger thy might, for all these considerations, yde thoughtes will not forsake thée, though it must néedes be a sounde slepe and a very drowzy dreame, that wil not be awaked with suche incitations. Yet thou must not be discomforted, but howe muche more difficultes dw arise, so muche the more stoutly thou shouldest striue to atchiefe thy enterprise. Assay then whether the search of hel paynes will be more behouefull vnto thée, cõcerning which, two things are chiefly to be noted, that is, the vehemencie of their smart, and the time of their continuance. The least of these is able to mollifie the moste stubborne and stony harte of the worlde: but he whiche is not moued neyther with the one nor with the other, is eyther dead in his soule, or els beléeueth not that whiche the Christian fayth sheweth. For though the greatnesse of hell torments can not be imagined nor expressed,

ſed, yet that little whiche may be knowen thereof is ſufficient to ſcalde and conſume thy harte within thée, with the onely remembraunce thereof. Propone nowe to the viewe of thy vnderſtanding the generalitie of the payne, which they that be tormented are dryuen to thinke vpon. For the wyll can wiſhe for nothing els but wickedneſſe: the memorie can thinke vpon nought els but miſerie, for remembring their pleaſures paſſed they augment thereby their greefe and calamitie: The eyes ſhall ſée nothing els but hideous monſters: The eares ſhall heare nothing but howling and wéeping: the touching ſhall féele nought but fyre, froſte, and ſerpentes: the taſte ſhall haue no ſent but ſtenche and græfe: the imagination ſhall be filled with wrath and woe. For all the euyls that maye be imagined ſhall ſodenly ruſhe vppon them, and all recreation that can be deſired, ſhal be gone and vaniſhe away vnwares.

Theſe are pinching paynes, yet no

leſſe

leſſe noyſome is the ſocietie and companye of the condemned crewe, the wo3me whiche neuer dyeth, the continual and darke night. And mo3e than all the reſt, is the ſo3rowe to haue loſt God, without all hope to haue him agayne fo3 euer. Whiche græfe ſurmounteth thoſe ſenſible ſmartes, as the diuine beautie is mo3e infinite and excellent then al the b3utiſhe defo3mitie and barbarous ty3annie of hel.

To theſe conſiderations adioyne yet the perpetuitie of their continuance, and howe to the condemned carcaſſes ſhoulde be no ſmall crumbe of conſolation, to hope that after thouſandes of yeares mighte be leſſoned one thouſande parte of their puniſhmentes: o3 that they would ceaſſe when the Ocean ſea ſhoulde be d3yed vp, by taking from thence euery thouſande yere one d3op of water. And that they might be releaſed after ſo long and vnmeaſurable a time. If thou deliberate and ponder heerevpon aduiſedly, thou ſhalte bee abaſhed in thy ſelfe, and

filled

filled with moſt iuſt feare. If thou accuſtome thy ſelfe to ſuche exercíſes, and doeſt perſeuer therein, in ſhort ſpace thou ſhalt become a newe man, for by theſe meditations thy minde ſhal be brought to deſpiſe the world, to ſhunne ſinne, to feare theſe paynes, and to loue vertue. And though at the beginning thou be appalled and affrighted vehemently, yet haue patience a whyle, for thy colde feare ſhal be qualified and tempered with the heate of loue, as the black night is turned by little and little into the brighte ſhyning day.

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